THE LEDGER SOON BEGINS A THRILLING STORY OF RUSSIAN-JAPANESE WAR

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By
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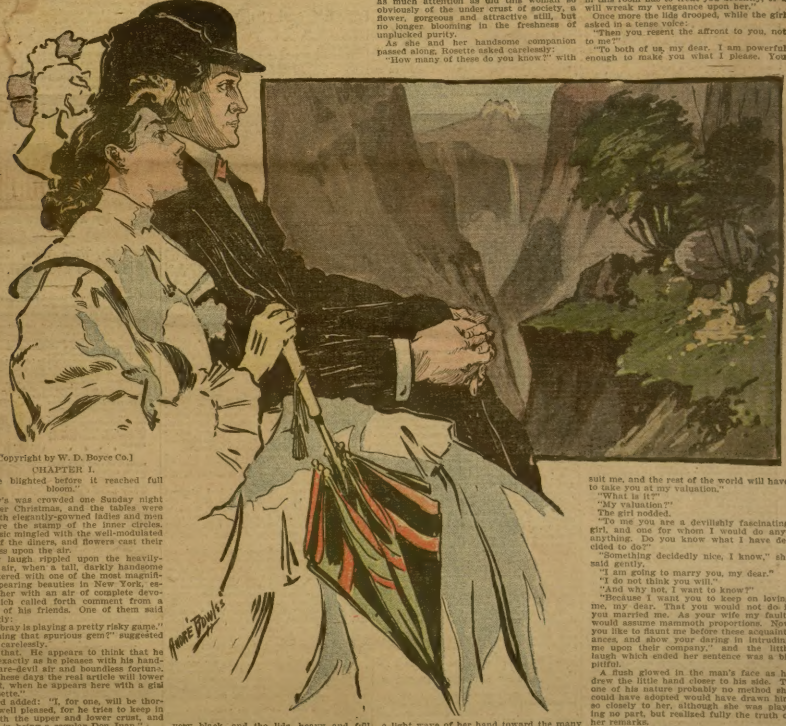
Willard.

A SACRIFICIAL SECRET;

Or, The Lurid Letter of Revenge.



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CHAPTER I.

"A rose blighted before it reached full bloom."

Sherry's was crowded one Sunday night just after Christmas, and the tables were filled with elegantly-gowned ladies and men who bore the stamp of the inner circles. Soft music mingled with the well-modulated voices of the diners, and flowers cast their sweetness upon the air.

A low laugh rippled upon the heavily-scented air, when a tall, darkly handsome man entered with one of the most magnificent appearing beauties in New York, escorting her with an air of complete devotion which called forth comment from a number of his friends. One of them said sneeringly:

"Mowbray is playing a pretty risky game."

"Flashing that spurious gem?" suggested another carelessly.

"Just that. He appears to think that he can do exactly as he pleases with his handsome, dare-devil air and boundless fortune. One of these days the real article will lower his crest, when he appears here with a girl like Rosette."

A third added: "I, for one, will be thoroughly well pleased, for he tries to keep in with both the upper and lower crust, and delights in being a regular Don Juan."

The young man who called forth these comments moved along with a certain graceful air, and gazed with astounding pride upon the girl whose small hand lay upon his black sleeve. To the uninitiated, there was nothing in her appearance to mark her as set aside from the proper representatives of her sex, but no man in that vast assembly would have allowed his wife, mother or sister to associate with Rosette Carrington, so surely did the Crimson Letter gleam upon her milk-white breast.

She was a lovely girl, barely twenty, and as yet the blight of her life had but given her added charm. Tall and slender, her form of beauty suggested Spain, although she had been born in the farmhouse of a Pennsylvania Dutch farmer. Her hair was inky black, but fine and fluffy, and waved back from her low, smooth brow; skin of a heavy cream, clear as the leaf of a magnolia blossom, and tinged with a dash of crimson; while her ripe full lips were brilliant in coloring. The flashing eyes were very black, and the lids, heavy and full, edged with long, dark lashes, had a curious trick of drooping until there remained nothing but a shadow on the youthful cheek, then, suddenly lifting, disclosed eyes like living jewels.

The exquisitely-developed figure, enhanced by French dressmakers, was the envy of every woman, and upon this particular night was draped in a trailing gown of some filmy pink material, over which were scattered tiny pink roses cunningly made of chiffon. In each rose glittered a fine diamond like a dew drop. In the meshes of her hair were half a dozen precious stones, while a delicately-wrought gold chain, some four yards in length, was twisted several times about her neck and fell over her swelling bosom, to support a locket, ablaze with diamonds. The value of the chain may be realized when the statement is made that there were over ten thousand gems in the tiny gold links.

Any woman might have worn as marvelously charming clothing, and not attracted as much attention as did this woman so obviously of the under crust of society, a flower, gorgeous and attractive still, but no longer blooming in the freshness of unplucked purity.

As she and her handsome companion passed along, Rosette asked carelessly:

"How many of these do you know?" with a light wave of her hand toward the many women.

"Nearly all," Harwood Mowbray replied, allowing his voice to sink until his words reached only her ears, a trick of his with women.

Rosette gave another of her brilliant laughs, suggesting in her singularly sweet voice:

"And one of these times, I know a young man who is going to get decidedly thrown down."

"By whom?"

The girl's eyebrows raised delicately:

"A careful mamma of one of the spotless buds," and the heavy lids drooped over the dark eyes.

"Rosa, dear, listen. If any one cares to try such a trick on us, she will regret it until the end of her days," and there was an ugly sound in the deep, full voice.

Rosette flashed her glowing eyes upon him as she whispered:

"My darling, do you mean it?"

"I do! If I bring you here, every woman in this room has to treat you decently, or I will wreak my vengeance upon her."

Once more the lids drooped, while the girl asked in a tense voice:

"Then you resent the affront to you, not to me?"

"To both of us, my dear. I am powerful enough to make you what I please. You suit me, and the rest of the world will have to take you at my valuation."

"What is it?"

"My valuation?"

The girl nodded.

"To me you are a devilishly fascinating girl, and one for whom I would do anyanything. Do you know what I have decided to do?"

"Something decidedly nice, I know," she said gently.

"I am going to marry you, my dear."

"I do not think you will."

"And why not, I want to know?"

"Because I want you to keep on loving me, my dear. That you would not do if you married me. As your wife my faults would assume mammoth proportions. Now you like to flaunt me before these acquaintances, and show your daring in intruding me upon their company," and the little laugh which ended her sentence was a bit pitiful.

A flush glowed in the man's face as he drew the little hand closer to his side. To one of his nature probably no method she could have adopted would have drawn him so closely to her, although she was playing no part, but realized fully the truth of her remarks.

"You think I have no power among these people, then?" he asked slowly, a somber gleam appearing in his eyes.

"I know, Harwood, that you can accomplish a good deal, but even you cannot make any of these women recognise me," was the quiet answer.

"I can't? Rosette, you little know how thoroughly I hold them in the hollow of my hand. The majority of these women with girls to marry are continually setting traps for my feet."

"Even then I am too big a pill to swallow," was the careless answer.

"Wait and see," he said, casting his eyes about the room. In one corner he saw a lady whom he knew well. He had attended the weddings of three of her daughters, and knew very well that there was a fourth, still in a convent, for whom the ambitious mother had decided to capture his handsome self. This lady was accompanied by a girl, possibly the convent-bred daughter home for the holidays.

Without giving Rosette time to fathom his purpose, Mowbray led the girl up and with one of his fascinating smiles, said to the society leader:

"Good-evening, Mrs. Darrow. Will you permit me to present a very dear friend of mine, Miss Rosete Carrington?"

Mrs. Darrow raised her eyes and looked earnestly at the young man for a moment, holding her fork half poised, then turned and let her eyes sweep from Rosette's dark head to her small, high-heeled shoes; then rising she said to her companion:

"Come, Spring!" and swept haughtily from the floor.

The rebuke was so direct, so open, that every one within earshot heard, and many others saw the arrogant Harwood Mowbray shown that with all his wealth he could not transgress without taking the consequences.

For a few seconds he stood motionless, then he muttered a frightful oath that frightened Rosette, who had become very white, but she only bit her full under lip, and waited. Instantly recovering himself, he drew her on, although she said in a low tone:

"Never mind, she did exactly right; you ought not to have done that, although I appreciate your goodness to me."

"What do I care about her rights? I told you that they must receive you. Why, Rosette, half, two-thirds of the women here are no better, if as good, as you, and I can trust you to walk straight enough now, can't I?"

"I think you can."

"Very well, my future wife has been grossly insulted. Do you think I am going to stand that?"

"Let me ask you to drop the whole thing for my sake," the girl said gently.

"It is about the only thing I won't do for you, Rosa. I swear I will make trouble for that woman before I get through. She has injured me through my deepest affections, so will I strike her."

With her cheeks still pale the girl said softly:

"Harwood, it is not worth while to avenge such a woman as I. Do you now appreciate that some women cannot be insulted, and I am one? Take me home; I feel as though I could not stand this crowd, the glare and sneering faces."

Mowbray shook his head, and in the face of those of his friends who had seen him insulted he drew the girl along to the table he had reserved for them, saying as he did so:

"Mrs. Darrow is a woman of fashion, wealth and social prestige, but I will reach her. It may take months to do it, but I intend to bring her to her knees and beg me to permit her to openly champion the girl she so insulted tonight. Yes, to her knees—you just wait and see. Now, darling, what will you have? How I long to begin my work of revenge!"

CHAPTER II.

"The sweetest thing on earth—a pure, innocent woman-child."

"That's the loveliest girl in America."

"Seen them all, I suppose, Orrin?"

"Perhaps I've missed a few, but this suits me."

Two young men, exquisitely dressed, were standing about 5 o'clock in the afternoon on the rear platform of a Pullman attached to a Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific train, some six months after the incident related in the preceding chapter. One was Harwood Mowbray, the other one of his most intimate friends, Orrin E. Mitchell. They were looking at another group, composed of an elderly lady, the Pullman conductor, and a beautiful girl of seventeen summers.

The conductor was just explaining that the train was passing over a single track spanning a ravine several hundred feet below. The year before a most frightful accident had occurred just at this spot, the train being derailed and plunged into the chasm beneath, nearly all of the passengers being instantly killed.

As the conductor finished his grewsome story, the young girl in a sweet, clear voice that sounded like a chime of bells on an early spring morning said:

"Why, that seems almost impossible; everything is so perfectly lovely here, the air is like distilled dew, and I can catch the perfume with each breath. Does it seem, auntie, as though any one had ever been killed here?" and she turned toward the elder lady.

The latter smiled indulgently as she answered:

"Ah, Spring, when you reach my age you will learn that tragedy and comedy tread on the heels of each other, and that the portal of Death is oftentimes the most beautiful part of life's course."

The charming girl shivered. At seventeen death is a grim monster. The landscape was growing still more beautiful, and in accordance with her mood. The purple shadows were beginning to gather over the hills. One by one the twinkling stars appeared, lights glimmered in the houses as the train swept by, and darkness was beginning to descend. While the girl was enjoying herself immensely, a sixth joined the party, saying in a bluff way:

"Here, here, here! The dining car's on."

The girl caught the newcomer by the arm, crying musically:

"You dear, funny Uncle Jabez, I want to look at the scenery."

"Good enough, but don't sacrifice your stummick to landscape."

The elder lady laughed merrily, and said in a pleasant way which seemed her natural manner:

"I agree with you, Jabez. This scenery is beautiful, but I am willing for dinner."

Upon his first appearance, the elderly gentleman had been recognized by the young man called Orrin as a Wall street broker with whom he had done considerable business, Jabez Searl. As soon as they were seated in the dining-room, he managed to catch the latter's eye, and a few moments later the young men were introduced to Mrs. Searl, who later on they found rejoiced in the name of Altina.

Mr. Searl seemed bubbling over with fun, and merrily asked, before introducing the young girl:

"Here, here, here! what do you mean by being 'way out here, so far from God's country?"

"I might say the same thing to you," was the easy answer, "but I make it a point never to interfere with a man's private affairs."

"That's the thing," spluttered Mr. Searl, who dearly loved a joke no matter how mild, and so pleased was he with it, that he insisted upon repeating it to his women folks, fearing that they did not comprehend it.

"Suddenly he added: "My niece, gentlemen, Miss Spring Violette Darrow."

As Mr. Searl dropped heavily into his seat after presenting his niece, he asked jocosely:

"That name pretty near knocked you out, didn't it, boys?" while his wife said reproachfully:

"Now, Jabez!" and Spring blushed divinely.

With all the suavity acquired by ten years' association with the very best society of this and foreign countries, Orrin Mitchell said pleasantly:

"Happy indeed is the family that has Spring ever with it," while Harwood Mowbray smiled and murmured in his low tones:

"A gentle, blushing violet."

The dinner was a very pleasant one, although Mr. Searl showed an inclination to monopolize the conversation, and had to be reproved occasionally by his wife. All who saw him with his niece could see his affection for the sweet young girl, and during the conversation he told the young men that he had borrowed her from her parents. She certainly was a lovely, tender-hearted girl, emerging from childhood into womanhood, with all the innocence of the former state, and the grace and elegance of the latter. Her hair, which had never been cut, was like a golden nimbus about her well-shaped head, and when unfastened fell below her knees. Here and there a straying tendril caressed the milk-like skin in a manner maddeningly distracting. Her eyes were like her namesake flower after a life-giving rain, and when seen half-shaded by long, curling lashes, had already set more than one man's heart to beating, and left a cruel ache behind. They were true eyes, however, although unshadowed by any sorrow. Her few bright years had been passed in gay lightness of heart. Of the great overpowering, masterful passion of love, she knew no more than a little child playing with the golden sands of the seashore, or the babe cooing in its mother's arms. The face—ah! could any one describe the face of Spring Darrow as it looked that evening, flushed with happiness and youth? The features were perfect, the rosebud mouth like a flower thrown carelessly on the matchless skin; the dashes of color in the soft cheeks like marks of angel kisses, while in the rounded chin was a dimple that showed that an angel finger had been laid there at her birth. Her little teeth could be seen behind her scarlet lips when she laughed, and as the evening proceeded both young men were willing to admit that her name suited her. Her figure was as yet somewhat undeveloped on account of her youth, but gave promise of magnificent proportions, and her hand and wrist were as daintily perfect as though from the chisel of a master sculptor.

This was the girl, fresh as a violet herself, fragrant-breathing, pleasure-giving Spring, spotless of the world, like a newly-fallen snowflake, as she appeared before Orrin H. Mitchell and Harwood Mowbray, the latter of whom has already been introduced. Beautiful in appearance, charming in manners, spotless in morals, she was too sweet and pure to exchange a word with these two men of the world, versed in all its enticing vices. They were both pleasing and courteous and were welcome guests at her own mother's home, although neither made any secret of their lives, and their associations with those of the under crust of society.

Harwood Mowbray was, as has been said before, a tall, gracefully-proportioned man, with a certain melancholy manner which had proven too seductive for many of the fairer sex. His soft, dark eyes, set in a rather Byronic cast of countenance, from which his black hair was thrown artistically, could express almost every shade of emotion, few if any of which were reflected in his heart. His wealth was immense, he having inherited from several members of his family, as well as his father, and he well knew his value in the social market.

Orrin H. Mitchell, his cousin and friend, was a blond giant of thirty, with keen gray eyes, a slightly florid complexion, and magnificently athletic figure. At college he had won distinction both on the diamond and gridiron, and was still interested in athletics of every kind, being an expert in more lines than one. Unfortunately—for he possessed so many admirable qualities—Orrin Mitchell had led a useless, dissipated life, with no decided aims or purposes, and, like Mowbray, numbered his friends from the haughty Fifth avenue belle to leaders of the demi monde. Perhaps it would have been difficult to tell which possessed more wealth, he or his cousin. Neither would ever have to give a thought to his fortune, but both sometimes took a flyer on Wall street, just as they backed horses, played poker or indulged in other forms of gambling for the excitement of the thing.

As for the other members of the party, Mr. and Mrs. Searl, a few words will introduce them. The former was a short, stout man, with dark red hair, quite thin on top. Until he was forty his life had been spent in a small town, where he had become its leading banker. A singularly fortunate deal induced him to move to New York, where his keen, shrewd manipulation of the market soon brought him into prominence among the brokers, and when, at sixty-five, his physician told him that he must abandon Wall street and seek relaxation, he found himself many times a mililonaire.

While still in his native town he had married a pleasant lady, who had been a schoolteacher, although as ignorant of the world as Spring herself.

When Mr. and Mrs. Searl had planned their journey they had begged Mrs. Darrow, Mrs. Searl's sister, to allow them to take her with them, and that lady had consented, for she did not wish to take the girl to any watering place, and her course of study was finished.

To the surprise of Mr. and Mrs. Searl and their charge, it was discovered that the young men were bound for the same place as they, Manitou and Pike's Peak, and they would have been all the more astonished had they known that until the two parties had merged into one Mowbray and Mitchell had been bound for Oregon. After dinner Mr. Searl invited the two young men into his private car, and on account of their former slight business relations, he drew Mitchell to his desk, and Mrs. Searl settled down comfortably for a slight doze.

Mowbray was delighted. For six months he had been waiting for his chance, and now it was at hand, and had he been asked he truthfully might have said that his task was all the easier because of the charm of the girl.

What was the task he set himself to accomplish, and how did he propose to affect Mrs. Darrow?

Had he forgotten Rosette Carrington?

Over his heart this unromantic man wore a little jeweled locket, bearing a lovely portrait of that girl, and a lock of her soft hair. Still, in spite of all this, he leaned over Spring's shoulder, and with a soft, tender light in his dark eyes he whispered:

"I wonder if I can induce you to grant me a great favor—one I have no right to ask?"

Spring raised her own beautiful blue eyes, and met his melting brown ones which seemed to hold in their depths all the tenderness of the ages.

"What favor do you wish?"

"I want permission when I speak to you alone, to call you Miss Spring, the name suits you so entirely," he said with an echoing cadence in his voice.

"Why, of course you can. Call me Spring if you desire. Everybody does. I'm just a little girl as yet."

The dark eyes gazed gently and tenderly into the blue ones, and then he returned:

"A child! Thank God there are few children like you for the peace of us men. Child! Child! Has no one ever told you of the wonderful power you hold in those dainty hands of yours? Do you not realize that men's souls are raised from the mire to Heaven, or thrown into the fires of hell, by just such innocent, childish hands as yours?"

Spring gazed at him in utter astonishment. Such fervent language was utterly unknown to her.

"You mean what you say?" she asked wistfully, for the thought of power is sweet to a woman, be she seventeen or seventy.

Mowbray raised his eloquent eyes and asked in real amazement:

"Has no one ever told you how wondrously beautiful you are?"

"No one."

"Why, my child, you are the most lovely girl I ever saw," and he smiled tenderly.

"Oh, I'm not," she said a little shyly.

"What do you mean?"

"The lady you were sitting with that night when mamma dragged me away, last winter, was truly lovely," and she sighed as she remembered the charm she had recognized in Rosette.

For a moment the man's face flushed, but whether because of mentioning Rosette's name in connection with this innocent child, or the seeming disloyalty to the woman who counted the hours spent from his side as lost, it is difficult to say, but he regained his composure almost immediately and said quickly:

"Then you remembered me?"

"Of course, I recognized you at once. Did you remember me?"

Until he had heard her name he had not, but Mowbray did not allow that to bother him, and he said fervidly:

"Your face has never been out of my thoughts, it is so distractingly sweet."

No woman ever forgets the first time she is told that she is beautiful, and although Spring Darrow was destined to live many years, and pass through countless tribulations, she never could entirely erase the

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* * * * *

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* * * *

Wilson's Ear Drums make all the sound strike hard on the center of the human ear drum, instead of spreading it weakly all over the surface. It thus makes the center of the human ear drum vibrate ten times as much as if the same sound struck the whole drum head. It is this vibration of the ear drum that carries sound to the hearing Nerves. When we make the drum vibrate ten times as much we make the sound ten times as loud and ten times as easy to understand.

This is why people who had not in years heard a clock strike can now hear that same clock tick anywhere in the room, while wearing Wilson's Ear Drums.

Deafness, from any cause, ear-ache, buzzing noises in the head, raw and running ears, broken ear-drums, and other ear troubles, are relieved and cured (even after Ear Doctors have given up the cases), by the use of these comfortable little ear-resters and sound-magnifiers.

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71 Todd Building, Louisville, Ky.

memory of this wonderful evening from her mind, nor the emotions which he awakened. She will always recall with pain, and a singular feeling of heart-sickness, that June evening when she heard the rich, deep voice telling her of the gift God had bestowed upon her, that one which was to be both curse and blessing.

For a moment she hesitated, then said shyly:

"It pleases me to have you speak that way, although I am afraid that you do not exactly mean it all."

"You do not? Well, wait until time alone proves my fidelity. If you knew what is in my heart, you would——"

He spoke with his heart seemingly in his voice, when her attention was distracted by a crisp, clear voice saying:

"I say, Miss Darrow, the view off the rear car is now simply rippin'. Let's all go out and see it."

Spring jumped to her feet, glad to be delivered from her first love scene, for Mowbray's ardent words frightened her and made her long for her aunt's protecting arm. Mr. and Mrs. Searl were roused, and they all started out.

As the two young men stood for an instant side by side to allow the ladies to pass, Mitchell asked a trifle bitterly:

"Hope I didn't disturb your new love affair, Harwood."

Mowbray looked at him and said carelessly:

"Oh, no! Every bread and butter miss is just alike to me. Take your inning now and afterward for all I care."

CHAPTER III.

"Love brings pain as well as pleasure."

The following morning Spring Darrow lay in her luxurious berth and looked out with wide-open eyes upon what seemed a vast ocean. At first her eyes gazed, but her brain did not comprehend, for the little more than child was whispering over and over again the low words dropped in her ears the night before. There was a change, delicate but certain. Spring was no longer the unsophisticated girl, but the woman with a heart slowly opening to her heritage of pain and happiness, both of which were to be unusual in her case.

At last, occupied as she was with her first love-dream, Spring began to wonder where they were. Fresh from a convent, she knew well enough that there was no ocean near enough for them to touch it, and then suddenly realized that they were crossing a portion of the American desert. Now thoroughly interested, she eagerly scanned the landscape.

It was a wonderful thing to her to look out over that vast expanse of sand, over which the gray sage brush grew like some clinging moss. Horribly desolate, it appealed to her sensitive nature, and she shuddered as she pictured the privations of the pioneers who crossed those barren plains, not in luxury as she was doing, but at risk of life and limb. Looking down at its unruffled surface, she wondered how many a poor fellow lay buried beneath its relentless depths, who had found an unsought grave away from home and friends.

Life was so bright and happy before her. Something new and lovely had just come into her life, and yet Spring, lying safe and sheltered in her berth, felt a premonition of her fate, and shook from head to foot. Suddenly as she lay there, almost fainting with horror and an unnamed fear, the purple-hazed mountains began to loom up before her, and she felt a wonderful relief. A comforting sense of deep, abiding peace settled down upon her, and she eagerly pressed her cheek against the window to discern the shadowy peaks, standing out bolder and bolder against the cloudless sky.

By the time she was dressed and had joined her uncle and aunt, she had almost forgotten her earlier feelings, but blushed divinely when the two young men whose acquaintance had been made the night before, joined them.

"Grand morning," Mr. Searl informed every one, and he was not contradicted.

"You look more like a flower than ever, Spring," Harwood managed to whisper into the girl's delicate ear, and he was right, for her newly-roused self-consciousness brought the blood to her cheeks, and deepened the tender luster of her eyes.

Mitchell was smiling and made some really interesting remarks about the landscape, but Spring did not hear him. Her soul was filled with rapture at the thought of one man, the mellow sound of his voice, the slight touch of his body as the train swung around curves.

Suddenly right before them was a new peak, one they had not yet seen. It was boldly different from the rest. Above a certain line vegetation was dead, and above that reared a dark, forbidding, bald, stony summit, 14,000 feet above what had been her lifelong home.

As the train swung around the curve, Spring staggered, and Mowbray steadied her with his beautiful white hand, saying gently:

"Careful, Miss Darrow; always be prepared for sudden changes in life."

"Here, here, here! that's pretty good," Mr. Searl broke in, laughing in his hearty manner.

"Didn't know you went in for epigrams, old man," Mitchell said cordially.

They all seemed so genial and happy that it appeared impossible that vilest treachery could lurk among these people, and yet it was there and was destined to bring deepest woe and wildest despair to more than one. While the others were speaking, Spring saw the great mountain peak, and, clutching Mowbray, she half-whispered, all the color draining from her rounded cheeks:

"What is that?"

"What?"

"That mountain there?" raising a trembling finger.

"That? It is Pike's Peak," was the courteous reply.

Spring gazed at it for a moment, fascinated. Then a shiver convulsed her, she started to speak, but fell back unconscious into Mowbray's arms just as the conductor shouted:

"Colorado Springs."

CHAPTER IV.

"Beneath the lover's smile lurked the serpent's fang."

To say that Mr. and Mrs. Searl were astonished at Spring's sudden faint would be to mildly express the terror into which they were thrown. Mitchell was almost as helpless, but Mowbray never lost his head, and it was upon his dark, passionate face that the girl's innocent eyes opened.

"Darling," he whispered so low that she was not quite sure but that she had imagined the caressing word.

As soon as he saw she had regained consciousness Mowbray said in a low tone:

"She is all right now, Mrs. Searl," and gave way to that lady, and as Spring realized that her head had been pillowed upon his shoulder, she was glad to take refuge in her aunt's kindly arms.

Youth is vigorous, however, and within a few minutes the girl was sufficiently recovered to sit with her aunt in a carriage, while her uncle and the two young men followed in another, and were driven to Manitou.

The morning was one of the loveliest in the year. Through the streets of Colorado Springs, on to Colorado City, where Spring insisted upon snapping the old, quaint State House, built when Colorado City was the capitol of the State, they drove, and whenever the devious road showed forth Pike's Peak, the girl's face grew grave and her blue eyes seemed fastened upon its magnetic summit.

"These mountains do take you," Mr. Searl said, with his genial smile, leaning from the other carriage and looking at Spring's lovely face, over which so many emotions were chasing.

"Uncle, I do not like them," she cried impulsively. "I hate them. They seem to compress me, to hold me down. Help me, dear," and she threw out her hands.

Her aunt looked her amazement. The elder man turned from one to the other of the young men. Mitchell said quickly:

"Poor child!" but Mowbray explained:

"She is still nervous," and Mr. Searl, acting upon this, said in the soothing tone one would use to a babe:

"There, there, little girl, you will get used to them, and then you will love them."

A strange expression came into the lovely eyes, and Spring shook her head, although she said nothing more.

"The air bothers me more than anything else," complained Mrs. Searl, who had commenced to gasp the moment the mountains had been sighted, and had never ceased.

"It does annoy many people," Mowbray said courteously, then added: "Are you annoyed, Miss Spring?"

"Not in the least," she said, half-turning toward him, and blushing a rosy hue.

As he saw the lovely flush Mitchell cursed his friend in his heart, and longed for his easy, suave manner. Already the lovely, innocent girl had penetrated through the hard husk of a worldly life, and was making him long to be a better man, and more worthy of her.

"Well, Spring may be able to breathe all right," Mrs. Searl said with a good-natured sigh, "but wait until she reaches my years and weight, and then she will feel different," and all laughed at her merry expression, for Mrs. Searl was a lady every one was forced to like.

While the party had been chatting back and forth, the horses had finally brought them to the Cliff House, the best hotel in Manitou, where they had decided upon stopping, and Mrs. Searl was glad to set her foot upon something stationary after her long trip.

"What's that?" Spring asked, with her old-time laugh, as a hack pulled up just after them.

"One of the pleasant ways of extorting money here," Mobray said, echoing her laugh. "First the poor wayfarer tugs over that viaduct we saw at the depot, and after reaching the electric cars gladly pays his five cents. After riding a block or so he is called upon for another nickel, and as the cars stop blocks away from everything, and no man can walk in this air, a quarter is shelled out for a ride in the hack. Here one pays as he runs."

Spring lifted her sweet eyes to his as she asked gently:

"Isn't that true everywhere?"

"What?"

"That he who runs pays? It is those of us who ride that have life as it should be."

Poor trusting, gentle girl! How soon was she to learn that those who can suffer are the ones who are called upon for payment! Life is a hard, rough road at best, and even a rubber-tired carriage will not ease all the jolts. No premonition of her unhappy fate was in her heart, however, as she entered the great dining-room, with Mowbray by her side. All was joy and laughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Searl were delighted with the seeming conquest of Mowbray. Mrs. Darrow had confided to them her desire to secure this very young man for her son-in-law, she evidently laying but little stress upon the incident of the winter before. Since then she had met Mowbray several times, and found him, as ever, courteous and cordial. She had returned Spring to her convent school after that evening when she had called down upon her head the deadly enmity of this polished man of the world, and had not allowed her to emerge until the evening of the trip west. Mr. and Mrs. Searl were more than delighted to think that under their charge the lovely girl should meet one who could win her love, and at the same time come up to her mother's rather exacting requirements.

To his own disgust and real heart anguish, Mitchell found himself relegated to the background, for there was something about Mowbray's manner which told him that there was a deadly earnest in his friend's work. He had never seen him in love, but he knew that he had set himself to win another's love, and, once this was done, no one could stop him. That Orrin Mitchell well knew.

Breakfast over, the party started out for a drive, and following Spring's wishes took the Ute's Pass, and her childish delight was pretty to behold. She admired every little stream and waterfall. She nearly fell from her carriage taking snapshots of the beautiful views, all of which were afterward found to be out of focus.

Even the names afforded her pleasure, and she called her uncle's attention to them.

"Look, uncle, think—'Rainbow Falls,' 'Minnehaha Falls.' Aren't they lovely? Oh, I want something named after me," with a fresh burst of girlish glee, and Mowbray immediately declared that one of the little mountain streams dancing merrily over the projecting rocks should hereafter be dignified by the name of Spring D'Eau.

During the many years which were to follow no one of that party forgot the happy day, the golden-haired girl with her happiness and childish glee seemed to impress everything and to make those who met the party happy by infection.

Away up the mountainside a railroad glimmered in the sun, and now and then a train rattled by, seemingly in midair. At one place the train came from a tunnel, and Spring gazed upon the snorting monster, trembling with delighted terror. The driver ghoulishly pointed out several places where horrible accidents had taken place, but Spring stopped him.

"Please do not," she said gently. "See how the sun shines, the water dances, the flowers bloom. Surely we can be happy when all nature responds to the smile of God. Let us forget that there is anything like sorrow, trouble or misery."

Dear, helpless little victim in the meshes of fate! Soon enough was the time to come when she was to look back upon this day with wonderment that she could have been so blind, and to shed tears of no avail over what was forever lost.

When the sun announced that lunch time had arrived, the carriages drew up to Cascade Canon, and there, sitting on an immense rock big enough to have held the entire convent school where her girlhood had been spent, Spring and her companions ate a delicious meal, to the music of the cascades which jumped over the rocks. The mountains stretched invitingly up behind them, but even Spring with her fresh vigor was forced to abandon an attempt to scale them.

"You are not much of a mountain climber, Miss Spring," said Mowbray, laughing pleasantly as he saw how exhausted she was after a few moments' work.

"I know I'm not," she retorted laughingly, looking more entrancing than ever, her soft rings of hair tossing about her flushed face, her red lips parted and her eyes sparkling.

"Think of what those of your sex have accomplished in mountain-climbing," he teased, and she laughed back, happy as the world on the day of creation.

At last the party re-entered the carriages and drove slowly along, past queer little mountain shanties and groups of camping parties up the side of Green Mountain, clear to the very top where Green Mountain Falls are located. Here they dismounted, and under the pretext of showing her the beautiful view stretching out before them, Mowbray drew Spring aside and whispered:

"The world lies before you, my queen, What is your pleasure?"

Again the lovely color mounted to the very roots of the golden hair, and Spring said slowly:

"How delightful it would be to camp on one of these mountains with——" then she hesitated.

"With one you love," he completed, and he could feel the little hand, which he hed drawn through his arm, tremble like a caged bird.

For a moment there was a pause, and then he resumed:

"My heart's possessor, I can lay at your feet nearly as much as is spread before you, if——"

The soft, shy eyes glanced up at the dark, glowing ones.

"If——" and again the man hesitated, then resumed passionately:

"If you will admit me your master."

He had struck a wrong chord. With a terror-stricken expression Spring shrank from his side and said reproachfully:

"Do not. I cannot listen to anything of that nature. You see, I have been reared in a convent, and anything touching upon blasphemy hurts to the very heart."

For a moment Mowbray was puzzled, then he returned sincerely::

"My dear little lady, I can assure you from the bottom of my heart I had no such idea in my head. I am afraid we men of the world do not keep biblical matters as much in our minds as we ought."

The girl smiled once more, although the tears were near at hand."

"Then you do not remember the scenes of the Blessed One on the Mountain, when the Evil One spread out all the riches of the world before Him, saying that they should be His if He would fall down and worship Satan?"

"Indeed, I never thought of it," was the really truthful answer, although as he listened to the sweet, clear voice the man whose life had been so evil thought that he had offered the good things of life to purest innocence, with a purpose so horrible in his heart that surely there in the very center of nature some happy guardian angel would stretch out a saving hand and rescue Spring from worse than death. The blue sky was fleckless, the air rare, clear and sparkling like wine; the happy waters danced in the falls, changing to a delicate green color. Nature was atune with the spirit of the Creator, only man was vile.

In next week's issue of the Ledger the reader will find the continuation of this intensely interesting story. To each subscriber we are still sending a camera or patterns free as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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PAYING THE PENALTY; or, A MODERN LUCRETIA BORGIA

By MAJOR H. E. SCOTT

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CHAPTER VII.

IMPORTANT EVENTS TRANSPIRE.

Three months have passed since the closing of the last chapter. It is now the evening of the fifteenth day of November. A bleak wind is coursing through the streets of Chicago, chasing the flurries of snow through the open thoroughfares and piling it in white mounds against the walls of buildings, sweeping it in at convenient hallways, or bearing it out on the bosom of the lake.

There is woe in the residence of Stephen Kellogg; woe in the hearts of nearly all of its inmates; for the drifting snow as it scurries through Graceland Cemetery leaves a white mantle over a new-made grave. Within that grave rest the remains of Thalia Kellogg.

The family at the Dearborn avenue residence have just returned from the cemetery, and Elinor Kellogg is ministering tenderly to the weeping daughters of the banker.

"Come, my dears," she is just saying, "Julia has announced that tea is on the table. Nothing has passed your lips today. You cannot survive this sorrow without something to sustain your strength. Your dear mother is with the angels now, and you owe it to your father and to her memory to become more reconciled."

"Yes, my children," said the banker, "we must bow in submission to the will of God."

"Oh, papa, how could He!" And Janette left the madam's side, crossed the parlor and sank into the arms of her father.

"'He doeth all things well,' my child," said Mr. Kellogg, as he led Janette to the tea-table.

"Come, dear Laura," entreated the widow.

"Oh, Lawrence, Lawrence, why should it be!"

The cashier was seated beside her on the sofa, and it was his arm that supported her to the dining-room.

It was to her betrothed—to the one her beloved mother had been willing to entrust with her happiness—that she turned for consolation.

The widow bit her lips, but followed, leaning on the arm of her son.

Robert had already preceded them.

The young man's features and demeanor evidenced that he felt in its full force the bereavement that had befallen them. His eyes were red and swollen; his countenance was haggard. He loved his father and sisters, but his mother—his gentle, suffering mother, who had always pleaded his cause and made excuses for him in his indiscretions, he had both loved and revered.

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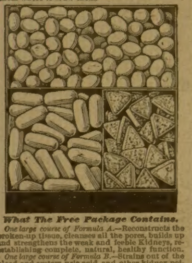

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We will now leave the family seated at the table and record a few events that have transpired since those disclosed up to the ending of the previous chapter.

From the date on which Elinor Kellogg had declared to her son that she had fathomed the mystery of her sister-in-law's sufferings, she more and more assumed the management of the invalid. She indeed so completely ingratiated herself into the good will of the banker's wife, and was so tender and solicitous in her attentions, that that lady was satisfied only when she was by her side.

Janette had been nearly heart-broken at having her place so much usurped, as she almost considered it. And more than once, with tears in her eyes, she had said to her mother:

"Oh, mamma, I am with you so little since Aunt Elinor came. I wish I could read to you as I used to all day."

"Darling," would be the reply, "you were fading away under the confinement; I cannot permit it longer. It is as fortunate for you as for me that your aunt came."

"Was it fortunate, mamma? I sometimes doubt my aunt's motives."

"She has no motives, dearest; no wish but to alleviate my sufferings and to see me restored to health. I fear you are a little jealous, my love. Do not cry, dear. You shall attend me as many hours each day as I think will be well for you. You know how I love you."

"More than you do aunt, mamma?"

"Far more, my precious. You are my own sweet child."

After one of these conversations, Janette, kneeling by her mother's side, would have her cry out; but her sunny nature and her mother's caresses would soon chase the tears away, after which she would remain happy until she again thought that the widow was too much abridging her rights.

Somehow she did not repose full confidence in her aunt. Laura being two years the elder and having, since her mother's sickness, been accustomed to direct the household affairs, had necessarily spent less time in her company.

Not that she was less devoted to her mother than was Janette, but there was another on whom a fair share of the affections of her heart were bestowed—one not of the immediate family—her betrothed. Therefore the idea that the widow was gradually slipping in between herself and her mother did not find lodgment in her brain, as it had in Janette's.

Thalia Kellogg, strange to state, from the date that the widow in her room was perusing a chapter in a certain work headed, "The Effects of Morphine on the Human System," had not again been found by her husband in as nervous a condition as on that evening referred to. She, singularly, had no recurrence of those weak, nervous spells from which she had so long suffered.

Her eyes were much brighter. Her brain seemed more active. She evidenced more of a disposition to hold conversation—actually seemed light-hearted, and to the great joy of her husband and children, was able not only to sit in her favorite rocking-chair before one of the windows of her room, but to walk from her bed to it unaided.

The banker attributed this wonderful change in his wife's condition to the unceasing attention of his sister-in-law. He may have attributed it rightly.

As the weeks passed after this happy improvement, Mr. Kellogg began to wonder that she did not gain in strength more rapidly. She apparently had reached a point where improvement had ceased.

Surely she seemed to hold what she had gained; in fact, her eyes—her large blue eyes—grew brighter yet, and she seemed daily more animated and hopeful. So she continued.

The doctor called occasionally, but stated that she was in better hands than his, and as he had been for six years endeavoring to restore her to health, Mr. Kellogg coincided with his opinion. Nevertheless he prescribed a tonic.

September and October passed with no further change at the banker's. The evening of November eleventh found the invalid in a yet more cheerful mood than usual.

At four o'clock on the morning of the twelfth there was a hasty tapping on the door of the banker's room.

"Come in."

The door was opened.

"Oh, my dear brother, it is I—Elinor! Come—come at once—your wife—your loved wife! My heart is broken. She is dead, dead, dead!" And the madam flew rapidly up the stairway.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Kellogg, leaping from his couch and hastily adjusting a dressing-gown and slippers.

In one minute he was bending over the still form of his wife.

"Alas!" exclaimed the bereaved man, "it is too true—my loved wife is no more! So sudden, so sudden! Were you with her, sister?"

"No, my dear brother," said the weeping madam. "I have usually stepped in two or three times in the course of the night to see how she was resting. I did so at 12 o'clock and found her seemingly sleeping peacefully. At 4 o'clock I found her thus!"

"Dr. Hewit should be——"

"I requested Earl to summon him. He is now descending the stairs."

"He can do nothing."

"Your loved daughters and son—shall I summon them?"

"I will break the sad news to poor Robert. Let my daughters rest unconscious of their loss until Dr. Hewit has arrived and taken his departure."

When the doctor arrived great was his surprise.

"I am almost at a loss," he said, "to account for this. Why, she seemed——"

The madam was lowering the pillow on which the head of the lifeless body rested. An eight-ounce phial, half empty, rolled from beneath it to the carpeted floor.

The doctor quickly secured it.

"This—why, one of my own prescriptions—one I gave your wife six years ago. It cannot be possible!"

"I think," said Elinor, "that she has had it constantly renewed. Julia, the negro girl, I believe, has been her messenger."

"Do—do you know when it was last renewed, madam?"

"I requested my son to summon Julia—ah! here she is now."

"When was this phial last filled, Julia?" asked the doctor. "When did you last take it to the drug store?"

"Yesterday mornin', doctor. Why, my missus ain't——" and Julia burst into a wail of grief that aroused the banker's daughters.

The doctor for a moment stood like a statue. He paled to the very lips.

"Your wife's death," he presently said, "was caused by heart failure. She passed away while asleep. Her death was painless. I deeply sympathize with you in your affliction."

The physician took his departure, bearing with him the half-empty phial.

Once on the sidewalk he exclaimed:

"My God! for six long years killing herself, and I, her attending physician, knowing nothing of it. Six long years, and a sufficient quantity in twelve hours to have killed a dozen men whose systems were not saturated with it. I feel very culpable, and yet why should I? The directions on the phial were plain. What victim of the morphine habit adheres to directions? And she—poor woman!—knew not what she was taking; she only knew that the remedy rendered her insensible to pain. I have been blind, blind! I should have removed the phial when I changed the prescription. God pardon me! Oh, cursed, cursed drug! And yet what would we do without it? Heart failure, heart failure—yes, heart stilled in death by my——"

The doctor entered his carriage and was rapidly driven away.

We will not dwell on the painful scene when the daughters entered the room of death, but turn to other characters of our drama.

George Howard, the old bank teller, had removed to Boston, and Earl now filled the position he had left vacant. Thus far he had filled it in a satisfactory manner.

Robert was yet in the speculative field, but had not succeeded in cornering Chicago's young Board of Trade.

The banker had withdrawn all opposition to a future marriage between his daughter Laura and Lawrence Terry, and the happiness of the young couple was only marred by the recent bereavement that had befallen them.

There was, however, a cloud in the horizon that they wot not of.

CHAPTER VIII.

AMOS KELLOGG SUSPICIOUS.

Stephen Kellogg, after the body of his wife had been laid in the grave, wrote his brother Amos of her death. He stated in his letter how untiring Elinor had been in her care of the invalid, but did not particularize concerning the malady that had taken her off.

A few days later he received a letter of condolence from his brother, from which we quote the following:

"Do not fail to at once write me all the particulars of your wife's last illness, and fully in regard to her death. You state that her demise was the result of heart failure—the heart failure was superinduced by what? Have you full confidence in the physician who attended her? Write me his statements in regard to the case."

The banker was greatly surprised when he read what we have quoted from his brother's letter. He rose from his armchair and paced the floor of his private office in a state of no little agitation.

"I cannot understand it!" he exclaimed. "Why should Brother Amos desire all of the particulars of my wife's last illness? Why does he wish more information in regard to her sad death? Why a knowledge as to what superinduced the failure of her loving heart to throb with the quick pulsations of life? Why to know if I have full confidence in the physician who attended her? All this he desires a knowledge of and at once. I am completely at sea.

"Why, I could scarcely give him all the information he asks. I had best request Dr. Hewit to write to my brother in person; but no, he has been too good a friend; for many years our family physician—I would not have him know of my brother's wild suspicions that Thalia was in the hands of one incompetent. I have all confidence in the physician who treated my wife.

"The heart failure was superinduced by—by—why, six years of an invalid life—a gradual weakening of all the forces of the body; by—well, I will write Amos at once and set his mind at rest. It was the will of God.

"Strange, though, how my wife rallied for two months previous to her death, then died so suddenly; but such is heart failure. People even drop dead on Chicago's streets from failure of the heart to perform its functions."

Mr. Kellogg wrote a lengthy letter to his North Carolina brother, the contents of which, it must be presumed, somewhat tranquillized that gentleman's mind, for when, a few days later, seated in the library of his Southern home, he had perused it, the troubled look that for some days had clouded his countenance disappeared as if by magic, and the words "Thank God!" escaped his lips.

A strange expression from one who had just read a detailed statement of the last illness and death of a brother's wife!

Elinor Kellogg, after the demise of her sister-in-law, became a yet more important personage in the banker's household.

The two young ladies clung to her in their affliction as the one who had nursed and loved their mother. Even the prejudice that had been growing in Janette's heart faded away, and she found comfort in her deep grief, in the arms of Elinor Kellogg.

The banker was somewhat surprised the morning Howard, the teller, had informed him that he must sever his connection with the bank; but on being informed that a wealthy uncle of that gentleman had recently died, leaving him a large estate in Boston, he congratulated his old employe and cast his eyes about for some one to fill his place.

He finally decided to entrust the duties to Earl.

"True," he thought, "he is young and practically without experience, but Terry can post him. He will soon be an adept. He must be honest. At least I will give the young man this chance. Lawrence carries the only key to the vault except mine.

"Robert is yet dealing in futures on our young Board of Trade. The Lord only knows what else he is doing; but I have faith he will come out all right. He can wait. There is plenty of time for him. He has no widowed mother to support and will one day inherit a share of my fortune.

"Yes, let it be Earl. How Elinor will be pleased!"

We have seen that the widow's son secured the position, and there we find him six months later, almost an adept, as the banker had predicted, telling over the bills of depositors at the receiving window.

"The Northwestern Bank" at that day was the general repository of an excess of funds of the banks of hundreds of smaller cities and towns throughout the Northwest, and in the regular order of business that institution both received and shipped by express many thousands of dollars each day.

By reason of the almost constant and continued failure of state banks from one end of the country to the other in those "wildcat money" days, it was necessary to use great caution, not only in receiving money,, but in making up packages for shipment.

It was the custom of this particular bank, and doubtless of many others, to file a tabulated statement of all bills shipped. This statement was made out by the cashier and enumerated what banks of issue were represented in the shipment.

In this manner the banks protected themselves against claims that they had shipped bills of defunct banks or bills on which there was a discount.

It was the further custom of the express companies, on being notified, to send a trusted agent to the bank to receive and receipt for packages of money for shipment.

The agent's duty was to check over the bills with the cashier before receipting for the same, and as will be seen in the ensuing chapter, this was a wise precaution, but nevertheless no guarantee against loss.

CHAPTER IX.

ROBBERY OF EXPRESS MESSENGER.

Many months have passed since the arrival of the widow and her son in the city by the lake.

Earl has now been connected with the Northwestern Bank for nearly two years, and very studiously has he endeavored to win the full confidence of all in any way connected with the institution. Nor has he failed.

As the young teller was on the point of leaving the bank for lunch at the noon hour on June 27, 1855, Lawrence Terry, the cashier, said to him:

"Earl, will you step over to the Union Express office and ask them to send an agent at 4 o'clock for a money package? You know twenty thousand dollars must be sent on that draft to the Central Bank of Milwaukee."

"Certainly," said Earl.

"Oh, Earl!"

"Yes, sir!" And Earl stepped to the door of Mr. Kellogg's private office.

"Business will be slack for an hour or two. Janette was complaining this morning—I wish you would jump into the carriage, run up to the house and see how she is getting on. I would go myself, but I have some leters to write.

"Here," as the young man was turning away, "hand this note to your mother."

Earl placed the missive in his pocket and hastened from the bank.

"Your mother!" mused the banker, "and the first of September my wife! And yet I do not seem to be especially happy in the approaching union. My daughters raise no objections; though I can see that the idea is not pleasing to them.

"Oh, well, it will be for the best. I shall, on the day named, lose one of my daughters, for Laura will be the bride of Lawrence. There will be a double wedding.

"Some day Janette will wed. Poor girl! I trust that she is not on the way to invalidism."

Mr. Kellogg resumed his writing and the time sped on.

It was after 2 o'clock when Earl returned to the bank.

"Well, young man, how did you find my daughter?"

She was reclining on a sofa in the parlor, reading, and stated that she felt easier. I trust it is nothing serious. She appeared bright and cheerful."

"Oh, I presume she will be as well as usual in the morning."

"Here is a reply to your note, sir."

"Yes, yes;" and Mr. Kellogg was soon scanning these lines written by the widow:

"Dear Stephen:—Janette seems nearly as well as ever. I think it must have been a slight attack of indigestion. Laura requests me to add—'Come home early;' and you know how willing I am to add the words. Your promised wife, ELINOR."

The banker smiled as he placed the note in his pocket and glanced at the clock.

"I am happier there than in any other spot on earth," he thought. And at half-past three he left the bank.

At 4 o'clock Philip Elsworth, one of the trusted Union Express agents, entered the bank, and Porter Lockwood locked the doors.

"You are on time, Mr. Elsworth," said Terry. "I am just ready to make up the package."

"All right. I will stand at the window while you run over the bills. I guess I can keep track of them."

"Oh, yes, I will give you plenty of time. You would hardly care to receipt for a pig in a bag, or for wild-cat money; but there is none here; the bills are all standard."

"I am sure of that," said Elsworth; "but duty is duty. Go ahead."

The cashier placed several packages of bills on the table back of the window and on the shelf above it where the agent could readily scan each bill. He ran over them, laying them aside in one-thousand-dollar lots, checking the bills from the schedule he had made out, as he proceeded.

The denominations were one hundred dollars, fifty dollars, twenty dollars, ten dollars, and five dollars; so it consumed some time to accomplish the task.

"It is all O. K.," said the agent. "Make up your package."

Terry hastily pinned a narrow strip of white paper around each one-thousand-dollar lot, marked on this strip with his pencil, "$1,000," under the figures placed the initials of his name, and with the aid of a heavy sheet of manilla paper and a strong cord, the twenty packages were soon converted into one.

Earl all this time had been standing at his desk scarcely four feet distant, apparently running over some columns of figures and paying no attention to the work that was going on at his elbow.

On the upper left-hand corner of the package Mr. Terry placed the figures, "$20,000."

"One minute more," he said, "until I label it," and, turning, he approached the open vault, leaving the package on the table.

"I will be making out the receipt," observed the agent.

"I cannot find—— oh, yes, here they are!" And the cashier soon came forward with a printed slip, to one side of which he applied mucilage, then pressed it down on the center of the package before him.

The outer surface of the slip bore in printed letters these words:

"Central Bank, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

"There you are, Mr. Elsworth," said the cashier, placing the package in the window.

"Here is your receipt," and the agent passed from the bank as the porter opened the door.

"It is 5 o'clock," said Terry, presently.

"Mr. Sloan," he continued, speaking to the bookkeeper, who had been posting his ledger at a desk facing the front windows, some distance away, "are you through for tonight? It is beginning to rain. I thought the clouds that have been above us all day would empty their cargo by night."

"I have just finished my work," Sloan said, closing the ledger.

"Well, if you will bring forward your books we will soon be on the outside of the bank. Wait for me, Earl; I promised Laura to take tea with her tonight."

"Luckily I have my rubber coat here," said Earl. "It may save me a drenching."

Ten minutes later the bank was closed and four men under umbrellas were hastening away.

A block from the bank a patrol wagon dashed by them.

"A case of drunk and disorderly somewhere," observed Earl.

"Yes, if nothing worse," said Terry.

After crossing the Chicago River, Sloan and the porter turned west, while Earl and the cashier passed on their way to the banker's residence.

It was 5:30 when they entered the door.

Earl proceeded at once to his room, not stopping in the hall to remove his raincoat.

Laura had met the two young men, and she, with Terry, entered the parlor, where they found Janette yet reclining on the sofa and her father seated beside her with an anxious expression on his face.

"Oh, there is no necessity of sending for the doctor, papa; I feel sure that I shall be quite restored by tomorrow. The presence of a physician would make me nervous," were the words she was saying as the lovers entered the room.

"Well, dear, I will listen to you for tonight," said Mr. Kellogg; "but unless you are entirely recovered by tomorrow I will summon Dr. Hewit."

"I think you should, papa," remarked Laura. "I may be needlessly alarmed, but I am much concerned about Janette."

"I would not have my little sister that soon will be, a sufferer," said Lawrence, "and I am quite ready to summon the doctor instantly."

"Not tonight, Lawrence, if you love your future sister-in-law," Janette said, smiling. "The future bridesmaid of your intended has no intention of becoming an invalid."

But a few minutes passed before the widow and her son entered the parlor, where all the inmates were soon deploring the rainy weather and Janette's illness, which would keep the family party from attending a theatrical performance that evening.

"Why," said Janette, "the rest of you can go. Why remain at home on my account? As for the rain—the carriage will protect you."

"I could not think of going, sister, with you not well enough to accompany us," remarked Laura.

"I would not dream of such a thing," said the widow, "though I am confident our pet will soon be herself again."

"Why, papa," suddenly exclaimed Laura, "here is a carriage dashing up to the door, and the horses are covered with foam. What can it mean?"

"Let us see," said the banker, rising to his feet and crossing to the window where Laura was seated.

"Why, Lawrence, it is Jacob Andrews, agent of the Union Express, and Inspector Hunt of the police department. They are coming rapidly up the walk. Something is amiss. Did you ship that money to the Central Bank?"

"Certainly. Ellsworth called for it."

All eyes being attracted in the direction of the two figures coming up the walk, none save Janette noticed how suddenly Earl started in his chair, or the meaning glance exchanged between himself and his mother.

Mr. Kellogg met the agent and the police official at the door.

"What on earth——'

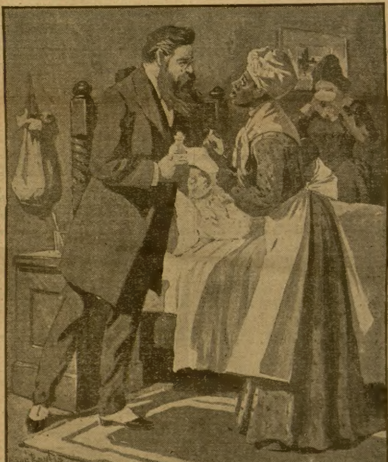
"Is the bank cashier here, Mr. Kellogg? Is the teller here?" said the agent excitedly.

"Yes, yes, they are here. What——"

"Please allow us to enter your library and summon them."

Mr. Kellogg quickly opened the library door and summoned the two young men.

The usually placid countenance of Earl in one moment had lost much of its composure, and his sallow complexion had somewhat paled. Perhaps he had been working too hard of late. Perhaps his confinement to the bank had been too constant.



"When was this phial last filled?"

But the five men were all more or less excited.

"Please close the library door," said Inspector Hunt.

"How——" began the banker.

"At 4 o'clock our agent Elsworth called at the Northwestern Bank and received and receipted for a money package of twenty thousand dollars. At 4:35 he left the bank with it in his possession. At 4:45 his unconscious body was discovered in the alley between Washington and Randolph streets. He had been waylaid, knocked senseless, and robbed."

"Robbed!" exclaimed the banker and cashier.

"Robbed!" unconsciously exclaimed Earl.

"Robbed!" reiterated the agent, "and of that package of twenty thousand dollars."

"Great heavens! and in the open light of day," said Mr. Kellogg. "Have you any clew—any suspicions as to who perpetrated the deed?"

"As yet none. Our first call is here to ascertain if during the day, or at any time within the past week, a suspicious character or characters, have been seen loitering about the bank."

"You see," said the police official, "this robbery was planned. The express agents were watched. The robber was aware that Elsworth bore a money package from the bank."

"I certainly have not noticed any suspicious character in the vicinity of the bank," said Mr. Kellogg.

"Nor have I," asserted Terry.

"I—I have no recollection of seeing any one whose appearance would arouse suspicion," said Earl.

"But Elsworth, Mr. Andrews—did he not see the man who assaulted him? Did he regain consciousness? Surely he was not killed?"

"As I stated, he was found in the alley in an unconscious condition. Exactly how long he had lain there, we, as yet, are unable to state."

"Certainly not more than five minutes," declared Inspector Hunt.

"But who discovered him?" asked the banker.

"On account of the rain," said the inspector, "there were few people on the streets, and they were hurrying along under umbrellas—none passing through that alley. You are aware that the saloon of Saphen Rogers runs back to the alley. One of Rogers' customers, a clerk in a real estate office on Washington street, left the saloon by the back door and found the body in the alley.

"He at first supposed it to be a case of drunk and down, but on closer inspection, recognized Elsworth, whom he knew to be one of the collecting agents for the Union Express. He at once gave the alarm, summoned a police officer, and notified the express company officials."

"The body was found back of Rogers' saloon?"

"Nearly so, Mr. Kellogg. But as I was about to say, Elsworth's body was borne into the saloon. Mr. Andrews, Dr. Thorp, and myself arrived there not five minutes later. A blow on the back of the head had knocked the collector senseless. The doctor applied restoratives and he revived sufficiently to state that on account of the rain he was taking the shortest cut through the alley to the express office with a twenty thousand dollar package.

"He stated that only the cashier, the teller, the bookkeeper, and the porter were in the bank when the package was made up; also that he was not aware of being watched either on his entrance to the bank or egress from the same.

"He was assaulted from the rear. The robber stole up behind him and struck him a fearful blow slightly to the right of the center of the head. His soft hat probably saved his life. The scalp was cut through, but there is no fracture.

"Elsworth stated that he encountered but one man in going from the bank, and that he passed him before reaching the alley. As he turned into the alley, this man was a few feet behind him. He glanced toward him, states that he was of a dark complexion, black hair and mustache, was well dressed, wore a derby, had on a dark sack coat, and was carrying both a cane and umbrella.

"He believes that cane to have been loaded, and that the man stealthily stole up behind him, struck the blow that rendered him unconscious, secured the package and fled."

"The rain," said Mr. Andrews, "would have rendered it an easy matter."

"Of course," said the inspector, "Elsworth had but a hasty glance at the man's features. His umbrella was raised, and as the agent glanced toward him, he tilted it forward, so he might not be able to identify him."

"A large or small man?" asked the banker.

"About five feet eight, Elsworth thought—the height of the teller there, I should say. Yes, and of his complexion. Lucky, young man, that I know who you are, and that you were in the bank at the time the assault was committed, for you would just about fill Elsworth's description. Only he stated that the man appeared all of forty years of age."

[Continued on Page Eleven.]

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A donkey knows when he has enough—unless he is a two-legged one.

Victories come high, but Japan continues to hold to the view that it needs them in its business.

A man's idea of a wise guy is another man who once had a chance to marry his wife but didn't.

Having no bridges worth mentioning to burn behind him, General Kuropatkin burned his supplies.

As Colonel Cody refuses to be reunited with Mrs. Cody, he may have a kindlier regard for her than is supposed.

It requires an effort to think of any future President who will be likely to come nearer earning $100,000 a year than the present incumbent does.

Booker Washington's advice, "Don't put a $5 hat on a 5-cent head," need not be appropriated exclusively by the people of any particular race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

New York is about to make a unique experiment in intramural transportation. The rapid-transit commission of that city, which has been considering for a long time the problem of providing adequate transportation facilities on cross-town lines, has at last decided that a "moving platform" furnishes the only adequate solution. The experiment will be made first in Thirty-fourth street, where the new system will be installed in a subway reaching from river to river. In this underground passageway three distinct platforms will move in either direction. The passenger descending the subway stairs will step first upon a platform two feet wide, sliding easily along at the rate of three miles an hour. from this he will step to another platform, with a speed of six miles an hour. The third platform, upon which the passenger will ride, is to travel at nine miles an hour and will be equipped with cross seats. It is believed by the rapid-transit commissioners that this method of travel will have many distinct advantages over any other that could be provided. The platform will be continuous and there will be no waiting for trains. More seats will be provided than can be filled. There will be no jar and no danger, the various platforms forming one continuous floor. It might be supposed that the friction created by a moving mass of steel several miles long would require an enormously expensive power supply, but the experts estimate that it will consume no more electrical energy to move 260 seated passengers on the platform than to move ten passengers in the subway trains. In elevated and subway trains the amount of dead weight to be moved for each seat ranges from 790 to 1,250 pounds. In the moving platform it will be only 437 pounds. As the motion of the platform will be continuous, there will be no waste of energy in stopping and starting. It is estimated that the platform can take care of a traffic of 75,000 passengers an hour.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

OR

THE BIRTHMARK OF BLOOD.

BY J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS.

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CHAPTER XV.

The shock of Howard's recovery had come upon Ellen too soon after her discovery of the cave to allow her to make plans for the future. She had passed in a few hours from the extreme of fear and loathing to the wildest, sweetest joy her heart had ever felt. As she crouched in the thicket, staring across the stone flooring of the opening in the wood at the man who was her greatest enemy and her husband, death for her seemed the only possible escape. He lived and he was near, and he was resolute to be avenged. But as she clung to Howard, not the surly master of the past two years, but the gentle Howard of her maiden's love, and as she felt his kisses upon her lips, and heard her name spoken in the voice of long ago, everything was changed; life seemed the only possible sequel to such an awakening—life, and love. As her heart beat against his, and his strong arms enfolded her, the wretchedness of her unnatural second life—her married life—seemed burned away in resistless fires; it seemed never to have been; the earth was changed, and she was the girl Ellen with the girl thoughts and the girl devotion. In those few supreme moments her spirit remembered no laws and no restraints. To her consciousness there was nothing, nothing but her love, and Howard's love, and the green wood to hide their happiness. She felt no shame because she felt no wrong. Sin found no place in Ellen's thoughts, nor in her desires. Her love, pure and mighty, freed at last from galling chains, cried out unabashed, eager, eloquent, as at rare moments an untrained voice speaks of faith in God.

The time of that exalted happiness was brief; she remembered, and feared. Her fear was of a chained man in an unknown cave in the midst of the wilderness. No one knew of his existence. No path led thither. The chain was sure. And yet——

When West came home from his day's visit, the sound of his distant footsteps caused her heart to leap violently while her face grew ashen. When she saw who had caused her alarm, she ran to clasp her boy in an agonized embrace. That prisoner in the wood threatened the child. If he escaped, he would steal West's love from her; he would poison the boy's mind against its mother. West, with a boy's natural distaste for close embrace, sought to draw away. The gesture terrified her. How easy it would be to win him from her; he was only five years old! He might even forget that she had existed; or he might be reared to despise her name.

Her fear allied itself with hatred. She hated that helpless prisoner, hated him the more because she feared. That night sleep refused to come to her relief. Her mind dwelt upon the unhappiness of the past, and she credited all to him. She recalled his bitter words, his brutal behavior. She saw him reeling in drunkenness, smelt his foul breath, felt his coarse touch, looked into his bloodshot eyes, heard his rough complaint, and felt herself once more in his merciless power. If there was pathos in his life, she forgot it. If he had been kind to her, she chose not to remember; or, perhaps, in her excited state she was unable to remember. She did not bring back his words of pleading, his beseeching glances, his craving for her love. She saw herself at his feet where she had fallen under his cruel blows. She heard his snarl, "Lie still!" and saw murder gleaming in his eyes. No wonder she hated him. He had taken her a young and inexperienced girl, filled with the fantastic, airy dreams of life as much like real life as the fleecy clouds are like the cruel cliffs which show their jagged outline and color. He had overridden every instinct of her delicate nature, he had crushed the feeble rebellion of her refined being, and, holding her completely in his power, a being lower than a slave, a wife who cannot return the passion of her lord, he had mocked her by asking for her love. Ah, yes, she had the right to hate him, and he had no right to expect mercy from her.

The next day Howard was absent upon his mission to the postoffice. He had borrowed a horse from his neighbor, and Ellen saw him ride away with cold fear in her heart. It was terrible to be alone in that wood with the thought of her imprisoned husband. She was tortured by the heedless prattle of her child. She longer to think, but his ceaseless questions prevented. The haggard face of the chained man rose before her like a ghost, and vanished when she sought to consider it closely. She had not resolved to do anything. She had not even determined to let events shape their own course. She could not have said to her inmost consciousness, "I will let him starve; I will not reveal his presence in the cave." But, after all, should she speak? Howard was unconscious of the wrong he had done, and no one knew she had been a witness. She could not find the way to that cave, nor could Howard. Why tell him, to torture his soul, to send him upon a fruitless search, to bring home to his conscience a crime of which he was not guilty? But perhaps, if she told, he might find the cave. Then Basil Quiteron would be freed. Then her boy would be torn from her arms, and Howard would be cast into prison for years. Perhaps she, too, would share his captivity, as certainly she would share the disgrace. But worse than all, the alienation of her child haunted her, the thought of the loss of his love and his respect. That would break her heart—yes, it would kill her.

But if it killed her, she could but die. What then? Was she justified in taking her husband's life in her hands? Her silence would mean—it would mean his death. It would mean a slow, tortured, pitiless death. It would mean—murder. No, no, that would not be murder since neither she nor Howard knew the way to the cave. They could not help his dying of starvation. If the help of the neighbors were invoked, everything would be made bare to the world. She had no right to publish Howard's secret. What a return that would be for his protection and for his love—to send him to the penitentiary! Had she not blighted his life already? Could she take from him the years that remained? Oh, if she had not followed him that fatal morning! If the secret were but known to Basil and to the Howard Glen whose memory had passed away, who had fallen asleep, perhaps never to wake!

But did she not know the way to the cave? Even while she told herself "No!" there flashed before her troubled mind the thickets and hollows, the peculiar shapes of certain trees and groups of trees which led the way; masses of mossgrown rock seemed to grin at her, saying, "You know us, you know us!" and the blackened arms of trees which had been struck by lightning seemed to beckon, "This is the way!" All that day food did not pass her lips. She did not tell herself why she fasted, her acts and thoughts seemed to move along upon a stream of impulse. Day waned and Howard returned.

He found her greatly altered since the first evening of his return to consciousness. She had grown timid, even afraid. He thought he understood, and made no effort to bring back her former self.

"You mailed the letter?" she said.

"Yes."

"You are very tired!" said Ellen, her eyes cast down. "I have put your supper upon your table."

"Will you not eat, too?" asked Howard, diffidently.

She was very hungry, and she longed to sit near him, but she shook her head and went to her room. West took a fourth meal with Howard, and Ellen could hear them talking. Howard's voice was mellow; love saddened it. The child laughed often. Ellen wept as she stood leaning against the partition. That night she thought, "It will take two days for the letter to reach him; at the end of four days he will come. Then I will tell the Man-Who-Loves-Me about Basil. He will know what to do. That will make five days to live without food. That will not harm him." And with this thought sleep visited her.

The next morning when she left her room Howard stood before his door. "Good-morning," he said, with his gentle smile. "You will not be afraid if I leave you today? I have a little lunch here, you see. I do not think I will be back till evening."

"Howard!" cried Ellen, growing white, "where are you taking that lunch?"

"I thought," said Howard, timidly, "that I would wander about the woods today. I love the woods, and now I can feel them, awake, as before I felt them in a dream."

"Then you are not taking—you are not going to any one certain place?"

"Why, no, I go to no special place but the Doggett's, and certainly I shall not go there. You will not be afraid, will you?"

"No," said Ellen, but her voice shook.

"I will not be far away, at any time," said Howard. "Good-by, Ellen." She knew his eyes were upon her face; that in spite

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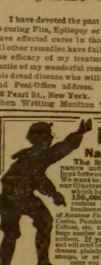

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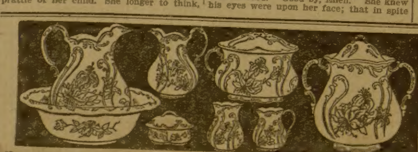

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of his resolution he craved a look into her eyes; but she could not meet his glance.

"Good-by," she said faintly, plucking nervously at her short dress; "good-by, Howard."

"Good-by," cried West, running toward him with uplifted arms. "I love you—good-by. And next time, mamma, he is going to take me with him."

Howard lifted the child in his strong arms, and kissed him. Ellen turned suddenly and entered the cabin.

When night came she was weak and her head felt light. She had not tasted food, and accustomed as she was to vigorous outdoor work, and hearty meals, the pangs of hunger grew painful. A fever heated her blood, and she found herself drinking ravenously. Then suddenly it came to her that Basil had no water to drink, that he was dying for water as well as for food. She seemed to feel every pain that was torturing him, and yet she knew his sufferings must be beyond her experience. She was strong and he was weak. She had the cabin for her protection, but he lived almost in the open air, in that damp cave. She had Howard's nearness to sustain her, but he had nothing to live upon but his feeling of vengeance and hate. When Howard returned, he noticed her flushed face, her burning eyes.

"You have been afraid!" he exclaimed, remorsefully.

"Yes, yes," said Ellen hurriedly, "yes, I was afraid."

"I will not leave you again!" cried Howard, and the pity in his voice caused her to look up. It was such a desolate look, so full of hopeless yarning and of love's despair, it brought an answering agony to his face. "Dear God!" he cried, looking upward, "what shall we do?"

"Good-night," said Ellen, and she left him standing there with the fading light of the sky upon his bearded face.

On the next morning, she found him dressed and awaiting her. "We will breakfast together, Ellen," he said gravely. "I have a little repast already spread. I have been waiting for you. Is West awake?"

She looked up timidly, but his eyes were upon the silent trees, scarcely yet gilded by the rising sun. There was a gentleness in his voice that fell upon her heart like a sacred touch, and his serene face shone with a holy spirit of goodness, as if upon it had fallen back an answered prayer from Heaven.

"He is not awake, Howard; and I do not wish to eat, now."

"I was afraid you would not be hungry," said Howard, timidly, "but I should like to have you eat with me, once more. I will not leave you today. I am afraid you feared the loneliness yesterday. Do you feel well, Ellen?"

"Not very well."

"Then breakfast may do you good. Will you not come, dear friend?"

"I will sit with you," said Ellen, timidly, "but I could not eat."

She went into his room. He had placed the simple food upon the box which served as table, and had drawn three smaller boxes around it for chairs.

"It is very poor food," said Howard. "I know that. How could you have lived upon it so long? It must be wholesome, for you are so—you are so much stronger. And I used to be delicate—when I came to myself the first time, I hardly knew myself." He smiled playfully, but the light vanished almost at once. Then he bowed his head and said reverently: "Dear God, from Thee our food ever comes; may we ever give our strength to Thee."

Ellen burst into tears.

He waited till she had wiped them away, then said: "It has been long since we ate together. You do not remember the last time?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Ellen, looking up swiftly.

"Your mother was very good to me," said Howard. "She let me come every Sunday. How well I remember her sitting at the head of the table—always so erect, you know, and we were a little afraid to laugh, were we not?"

"Dear mother!" whispered Ellen.

"There are very few women like her," said Howard with conviction. "She was always a lady."

"And your mother," said Ellen softly, "was always an angel."

Howard did not speak at once. Presently he said, "Yes, we had good mothers. May we prove worthy! I wish you would share my breakfast. I would so like to eat with you again. It would make me feel young."

"But you are young!" cried Ellen.

"Do you feel that I am young?" said Howard, with a little smile. "Once I thought the boy-feeling would never leave my heart. But it escaped, somehow. See, Ellen! you cannot guess what I have hidden here. You loved them when you were a child."

"Oh, now I know!" cried Ellen, smiling for the first time. "I have been wondering and wondering. I seemed to be smelling my youth, as if it were a flower—you know I always had such queer ideas. Do you remember telling me that once?"

"Of course I remember. But I meant original ideas—good ideas—only I was too bashful to explain when you laughed at me. You will eat some of my wild strawberries?"

"Of course I will," said Ellen, who felt half-starved. She began to eat, and the taste of the berries caused her to forget everything.

When she looked up he was watching her with a tender smile. "How hungry you were!" he cried, shaking his head playfully. "I am afraid it is a long time since you had supper."

Then she remembered Basil. She had forgotten him utterly. Remorse drove her to abrupt confession.

"Oh, Howard, Howard, I know where he is!"

"Who, Ellen?" he asked, alarmed by her wild manner.

She paused, afraid.

"Ellen!" cried Howard, his voice ringing with a strange note, "what do you mean?"

"Do not be angry with me, Howard. Forgive me. I have starved myself, too. But I meant to tell. Only I would have waited until the old man comes."

"Where is he?" Howard asked in a low voice. He had half-divined her secret.

"You kept a chain and handcuffs here; you said they were for your enemy. You did not know his name, but you meant—him. See, the chain used to hang from that nail. It is gone."

Howard was white, but his voice was steady. "So I made him my prisoner? Where?"

"You chained him up in a cave, far away in the woods. I followed you there the day you came to yourself. That is why we were together. You were returning from the cave. You had carried him food. I never suspected the truth. I followed to know where you went every day. It had been about a week, I think."

Howard had risen. "Where is this cave, Ellen?"

"I don't think anybody knows of it, Howard."

"Then you will show me the way."

"I thought I would wait till my old friend comes, Howard," said Ellen humbly. "He will tell us what to do. I overheard you talking to—to Basil. He threatens to take my child from me, and to prosecute you. He says he can keep you imprisoned as long as he lives. You threatened to starve him to death, but you could not make him change his purpose."

"I have no right to keep him there," said Howard sternly. "All I can do is to undo my wrong."

"And he will take West from me," sobbed Ellen. "He will never let me see him again. That will kill me, Howard."

"God is good," said Howard. "We must do what is right. To do wrong is to doubt God."

"Do you despise me, Howard?" she faltered.

"I cannot believe you meant very wrong, Ellen. I do not believe a real wicked thought could ever enter your pure mind, or an unholy passion take possession of your sweet spirit. We know not what he may have done in his despair and suffering, or how little able he was to bear the fearful agony of starvation. We must go at once, at once!"

"I would have waited till my friend came," pleaded Ellen.

"Why wait? No wrong was ever lightened by delaying to make it right. Besides he might die before then, and if he died, Ellen—God grant he may not be dead already! Above all, we have no right to hold him a prisoner for a moment."

"I cannot leave West," said Ellen, "and we cannot carry him to the cave, even if I am able to find the way. Surely you do not require me to take West to—him." Her voice was bitter in her despair.

"I will carry West to our neighbors; they will care for him. Then we will go, and liberate Basil. Ellen, you do not know what you have done. Oh, why did you not tell me at once? But you did not mean to do wrong. You could not for a moment have intended to leave him in chains to perish. But that might have happened. It may have happened. Ellen, we may be too late!"

"Then we will free him to ruin us," she said; "for he is resolute to destroy us."

Howard gazed at her intently, and she saw quivering in the depths of his eyes something that turned her cold with dread—it was something she had never seen there before; something like the awakening of a doubt, the coming to life of a suspicion. In that moment she realized that his belief in her was worth all sacrifice, and that nothing could buy it back if once it deserted her. It was not sympathy for Basil's sufferings, nor fear for his life, nor the abstract thought of right and justice—it was the terror of losing the faith of the man she loved which directed her guiding feet toward the cave in the wilderness.

CHAPTER XVI.

When they came to the edge of the open space in the midst of which the mouth of the cave gaped black and sinister, Ellen hesitated. Howard looked uneasily across the granite floor that sloped from the thickets. He carried a plentiful supply of provisions, and an empty bucket in which lay a file and hammer.

"There is the little stream," said Ellen, pointing with trembling finger toward her right. "May I hide there, Howard? Must I meet him?"

"Stay here," said Howard gently.

"Good-by," said Ellen faintly. "Good-by, Howard."

"God grant he is still alive," prayed the other. He hurried toward the brook, and filled his bucket, having thrust the hammer into his pocket. He had come far, but he felt no weariness. He ran to the margin of the cave and cried excitedly, "Basil!"

There was no reply.

Howard fell upon his hands and knees and stared into the darkness. The brilliant sunlight blinded him; he could see nothing. "Basil! Basil!" he called pleadingly, entreatingly. No answer came back.

He is dead!" cried Howard, rising to his feet and turning toward the thicket where Ellen crouched. "Basil is dead!"

Ellen crept into the sunlight. She was trembling from head to foot. They looked at each other with ashen faces and burning eyes. Howard called in deep despair, "Basil! Basil Quiteron!"

"I have killed him!" whispered Ellen, in horror, as she slowly crept toward the opening.

"No, no," cried Howard, "it was I who bound him here. You meant no wrong. You did not think, Ellen—you were acting for me and for your child. I am his murderer, Ellen, his murderer!"

Ellen raised her arms above her hear and cried out, "I have killed him, I have killed him!"

Howard slipped down upon the sloping floor of the cave. With shaking hand he felt for the matches he had brought with him. His hand encountered the hammer with which he had intended to break the lock of the handcuffs, since he knew nothing of the key. A moan escaped his lips. No use for the hammer, or for the provisions, or for the water. He struck a match and as its feeble light flickered he strained his eyes for a glimpse of the body, but nothing was revealed save the bare walls. He lit a torch prepared for the intended interview and rescue, and held it up. A shout escaped his lips.

"Howard!" cried Ellen from above, her agitated voice rising to a scream, "what has happened?"

"He is gone!" shouted Howard.

"Gone?" echoed Ellen. "He is not dead?"

"He has escaped. Merciful God! Look, Ellen! Come here!"

"Escaped!" cried Ellen. "Then some one has found him here."

"No," said Howard excitedly. "Look! He was chained to this stone pillar. See, he has worn a link of the chain in two upon its edge. Here is where he filed it away. The chain released him. What patience and resolution! The handcuffs were still upon his wrists. But here they lie, with the key in the lock."

He flashed the light about, as Ellen trembled at his side. The cave was small and it did not take long to examine its every recess. Not far from the length of the chain a hole had been dug in the floor, and in this was set a tin bucket. It had been concealed by one large flat rock. The bucket was empty. Within reach of the chain stood a small cask. In it still remained some brackish water.

"He drank from this cask," said Howard in an awed voice, "but could he drink with his hands bound?"

Ellen remembered how Howard had called his prisoner "Dog!" Basil had drunk as a dog.

The key must have been in that tin bucket," said Howard thoughtfully. "When the chain was cut in two he went to it and removed the stone, held the key between his teeth and turned the lock. I am sure that was the way. The key was no doubt hidden there to torture him with the thought of its nearness, and of his helplessness. I wonder if anything else was hidden in that bucket?" He lifted it from its cavity, but found nothing.

"Let us come away," said Ellen fearfully. "He may be lying in wait—he may have others with him. Oh, I am afraid, I am afraid!"

"Yes," said Howard, "we can do no good by staying. I wonder if he has been long at liberty?"

"Perhaps," said Ellen, "he has gone away to bring men to arrest us. Or he may be lost in the woods."

They climbed out into the sunlight.

"Let us hurry into the shade," whispered Ellen. "It is so light in the opening."

"Do not tremble so, Ellen," said Howard, as they reached the thicket; "remember he is weak and unarmed. I am strong and I can protect you."

"Will you hold my hand, Howard? It is so dark that he may be hiding anywhere. He could be crouching behind that log—let us not go near it."

"The worst has not happened," said Howard, "for he still lives, and we are innocent."

"But we do not know what may happen," shivered Ellen. "Let us run!"

"There is no need of that. And you would hurt your feet, Ellen. For the way is cruelly rough—and your feet are bare! Can you not trust me? I will save you from all harm. He is alive, Ellen. And we are innocent."

She walked beside him with growing confidence. It was her conscience which had filled the air with terrible whispers. But after all, her silence had not killed Basil. She had not meant for him to die; why need she feel remorse? And love held her by the hand. Still every sudden sound turned her cold, and shadows seemed to steal after them.

"I wonder," she whispered, "if he is not following us? Hush! Do not answer. Let us step more lightly. I am afraid he is following."

"Ellen, you torture yourself with vain——"

"Hush! what was that?" Ellen crept closer to him while her gray eyes grew large with terror. "Oh, it is coming nearer! What is it, Howard?"

"I hear nothing, poor Ellen."

"Let us not speak," whispered Ellen, "or he will hear."

They stopped, on their way home, for West, and the ceaseless flow of the child's treble voice helped to lighten the apprehension that rested upon Ellen's heart. As the child talked, she said to Howard in a low voice: "The cabin is no longer safe for me. We must go away at once. Every one can tell him where you live. He will bring them here. They may be even now upon their way. Then they will take you

(Continued on page ten.)

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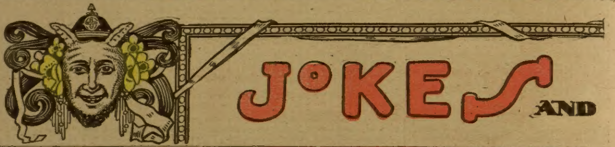


On the Safe Side.

"What do you think ought to be done about the tariff?"

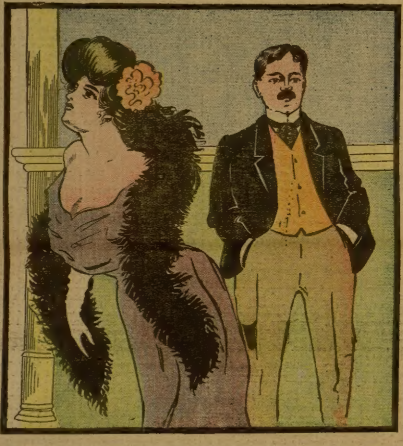
"This," answered the statesman, "is not the stage of my proceedings at which I do my thinking. I am one of the people who sit back until it is all over and then tell what was done wrong."

Explained.

"You are a poor barber," growled the angry patron.

"What you talk?" retorted the foreigner in the white jacket. "I am one count by blood."

"Oh, I see. You think you are fighting a duel with a razor."



She—Did you read the account of the Smith-Jones wedding in yesterday's paper?
He—No, I seldom read the war news.

Of Greater Importance.

"But I think you should marry the tall blonde," said the young man with the big cane. "She can arrange her hair beautifully."

"Bother her hair!" exclaimed the practical young man. "I want a girl who can arrange a beefsteak beautifully."

Towel Repartee.

"Can I step out and get a 'bracer?'" ventured the bookkeeper.

"No," responded the manager; "you should be like the office towel—always in one place and never dry."

"Well, if I resembled the office towel I would be a soak."

Before and After.

The honeymoon had gone the way of all honeymoons.

"Anyway," he growled, "you did half of the courting yourself."

"Oh, I don't know," she replied. "You weren't so lazy then as you are now."

The Royal Road.

Small Boy (in growing village)—Pop, the boys is gettin' up a little fire company. May I join?

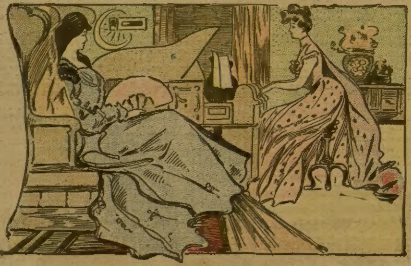
Pop (a well-read citizen)—Yes, my son, certainly. I am glad to see such a commendable ambition in one so young. Join it, and, when you are old enough, join the regular volunteer fire company and run with the machine every time it goes out. This town will be a big city some day, and if you've run well and fought well with a fire company a grateful people will elect you to high offices, where you will get big salaries for doing nothing, and will have a chance to steal all you want to.

More Humane.

Samson had been shorn of his hair by Delilah's shears.

"Are you angry?" asked a friend.

"Oh, it might have been worse," responded the former strong man. "If Delilah had been true to her sex she would have pulled it out instead of cutting it."



"Flossie Brown told me last night that she was 24 years old."
"When she gets older she'll have more sense than to tell her age."
"When she gets older she'll have more sense than to acknowledge she is old enough to refrain from telling how old she is, perhaps."

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Some alleged self-made men are not finished; they were too small for the job.

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A wise wife never reminds her husband of the fool things he said when courting her.

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There are stomach specialists as well as eye and ear and other specialists.

One of these told a young lady of New Brunswick, N. J., to quit medicines and eat Grape-Nuts. She says:

"For about 12 months I suffered severely with gastritis. I was unable to retain much of anything on my stomach, and consequently was compelled to give up my occupation. I took quantities of medicine, and had an idea I was dieting, but I continued to suffer, and soon lost 15 pounds in weight. I was depressed in spirits and lost interest in everything generally. My mind was so affected that it was impossible to become interested in even the lightest reading matter.

"After suffering for months I decided to go to a stomach specialist. He put me on Grape-Nuts and my health began to improve immediately. It was the keynote of a new life. I found that I had been eating too much starchy food which I did not digest, and that the cereals which I had tried had been too heavy. I soon proved that it is not the quantity of food that one eats, but the quality.

"In a few weeks I was able to go back to my old business of doing clerical work. I have continued to eat Grape-Nuts for both the morning and evening meal. I wake in the morning with a clear mind and feel rested. I regained my lost weight in a short time. I am well and happy again and owe it to Grape-Nuts." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Look in each pkg. for the little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Her Sensible Way.

He—It's impossible to please everybody in this world, isn't it?

She—I don't know; I've never tried it.

A Reliable Heart Cure.

Alice A. Wetmore, Box 67, Norwich, Conn., says if any sufferer from Heart Disease will write her, she will, without charge, direct them to the perfect cure she used.

Life As It Is.

Friend—What rent do you pay for this house?

Taxpayer—Alas! I own it.

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The Man Next Door.

Clerk—Revolver? Yes, sir. Six-shooter?

Customer—Yes, I guess that will do. If I can't kill him or at least ruin his cornet in six shots I'll give it up.

"The Earth" Free.

Many people would like to get The Earth free, and they can do so if they will write the publisher whose address is at the bottom of this notice. "The Earth" is a fine publication for people in the country, whether they live on a farm, in a country town or cities. It tells of the great West. It tells all about farm life, care of stock, about the climate in the different parts of our great country. It tells about the lands out West where winter is unknown and where cattle and stock graze on the hills the year round. The publishers will gladly send a free sample copy of this great illustrated monthly free to any one who will write for it. Address, The Earth, Room 13, Railway Exchange, Chicago, Ill.

The Spinster's View.

Belle—It must be an awful thing never to have had a chance to marry.

Miss Passay—Yes, but not nearly so bad as to have had a chance and let it slip.

A Dainty Little Maid.

She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt when it is going to rain without any one's help. She indicates when it is wise to take your umbrella with you, when you can leave it at home. In fact she is the simplest and best barometer made. She is an ornament to any parlor and a necessity to every home. She or one of her sisters will come to you with full instructions on how she reads the weather, postpaid, for only 10 cents. She makes big money for her agents. Address W. P. Randolph & Co., 82 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Why Complain?

Mrs. Aigen—That cousin of yours is just hateful. He had the audacity to say I "was no chicken."

Mr. Aigen—Well, I don't see why a good-looking woman should want a man to say she was a chicken.

The Doctor's Joke.

"Yes, doctor, I've been going the pace that kills."

"Until now you've become a case that pills," smilingly observed the physician, as he fixed up another bolus.

Summing It Up.

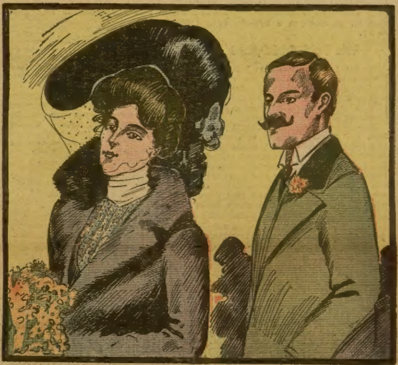
"I think it a shame that Washington hotelkeepers should charge so much on inauguration day," said the man with the sandy beard.

"Yes," chuckled the platform buffoon, "it is a sort of capital offense."

A Short Visit.

Mrs. Newwed—If we wait until the 12 o'clock train, we won't get to mother's until 11 o'clock at night, and she'll be asleep by that time.

Mr. Newwed—Well, then we can leave our cards and take the next train back.



The Wife—What did you marry me for, anyway?
The Brute—I give it up. What's the answer?"

A Hint for Hubby.

Mr. D'Avnoo (hotly)—I should think you'd know better than to leave your seal coat in such an exposed place. The first thief that comes along would see it.

Mrs. D'Avnoo (calmly)—No self-respecting thief would be seen with a seal coat so out of style as that old thing is.

Hamlet Had One.

Workhardd (after the play)—If an impractical dreamer, like Hamlet, had had to make his own living, what would he have done?

Friend (a poet)—Done as the rest of us do—borrowed of his uncle.

A Garb of Sanctity.

Miss de Fashion—Have you any dress material called "beauty of holiness?"

Clerk—No, ma'am; never heard of it.

Miss de Fashion—That's strange! Our rector said that during Lent we must worship the Lord "in the beauty of holiness."

Speeding Them.

LaMontt—So Edna and Dick eloped in an automobile? Was her father excited?

LaMoyne—I should say so! He was so afraid they wouldn't get off he offered to furnish the gasoline.

Used to Watering Stock.

"How did that young farmer from wayback manage to make such a strike in financial circles?"

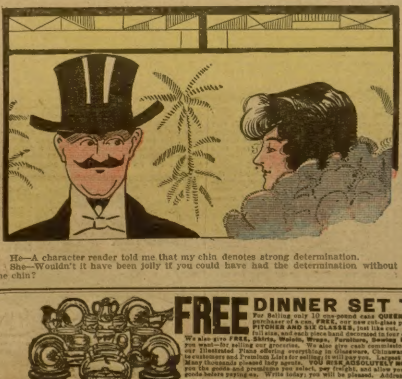
"It came natural to him; he was used to watering the stock."

Easily Described.

Ostend—Pa, what is a platform humorist?

Pa—A platform humorist, my son, is a chap who stands on the back platform of a car and makes jokes when a woman steps off backward.

No matter how silly a girl is her folks always expect her to marry well.



He—A character reader told me that my chin denotes strong determination.
She—Wouldn't it have been jolly if you could have had the determination without the chin?

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Back From the Dead.

(Continued from page seven.)

from me, Howard, and they will take my little darling."

"When I came to myself before," said Howard, "there was a dog——"

"He died long ago," said Ellen. "Oh, if he were living now, to give us warning! Let us not go into the cabin, Howard. It is better out here where we can see upon every side."

"An' I caught free fish," continued West.

"We can go nowhere till morning, Ellen. When morning comes we will ride to Mope Point. We may escape. Perhaps he has gone far away with no thought of vengeance. Perhaps he is waiting till he is strong to accomplish some purpose of evil. And if he is alone in the woods, it is better for us to be in the cabin where he cannot attack us unprepared."

"Yes, yes, let us hurry to the cabin. But the doors have no fastenings."

"I will make wooden bolts," said Howard.

"You have no weapons," faltered Ellen.

"I shall not need any," Howard answered.

They entered Howard's room, leaving the door open. "Yes, do not close the door," said Ellen, "for when it is closed we can't know what is outside. And now we know there is nothing but the trees."

Howard searched in a corner for his hatchet. "I will make a bolt to your door," he said.

"I am hungry," said West. "Ain't it mighty late?"

Suddenly Ellen leaped to Howard's side with the lightness of a wild creature.

"Listen! A footstep!"

"Poor friend!" said Howard, compassionately.

"But Ellen clung to him, quivering. "Save me, Howard! Save me from that man!"

"Somebody is coming," said West, starting toward the door.

"West!" screamed Ellen. "Come to me! Come to me!"

She snatched him up and held him to her bosom in one arm, as her other arm clung to Howard. There came to them the soft sound of footsteps in the matted grass. West, frightened by his mother's manner, clung to her neck and was still. Ellen and Howard stared through the open door with bated breath. Suddenly there appeared not many paces from the door the figure of a man. The glow of the fading sunlight was upon his face. It was Basil Quiteron. He was walking very slowly, but he did not pause. His glittering eyes seemed fascinated by the motionless group in the cabin. The threat of death was written in the thin, pinched face. His hands were clasped behind him. Like a specter, except for the sound of the stealthy footsteps, he flitted across their vision. As his thin, black figure reached the trees beyond the clearing, his eyes were still upon them, for as he proceeded he slowly turned back his head. Still he did not pause. He slipped among the dark trees—he was gone.

"Mamma," said West, with a shudder, "who was that man?"

"Ellen's arms relaxed and the child slipped to the floor. Howard caught her in his arms as she swooned away.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Basil Quiteron hurried to Mope Point, his suspicions regarding Ellen and Howard had almost vanished in the belief that she was living with her father. The account of the state-missionary, as related in the papers, had seemed conclusive. All this while, true to his promise to Mrs. Felton, he had kept the truth of Ellen's parentage a secret. He wondered how long Ellen had known that her father was an ex-convict. The shock of the real condition of affairs came upon him with cruel force. He had been driven to Howard's cabin, at a time when Ellen was away working in a distant field. Howard, seeing him coming, had crouched in his room with a madman's cunning, and with a madman's fury had there overcome the unsuspecting visitor. Leaving Basil unconscious upon the floor, Howard had quietly dismissed the stage-driver with the grim words, "He will stay with me."

Basil, with the handcuffs upon his wrists, and his own pistol turned against him, had been marched many miles through the wilderness to the cave. Everything was ready for his captivity. In the earth was hidden the tin bucket into which Howard placed the key to the handcuffs and Basil's pistol. They were just beyond the length of the prisoner's chain. Here stood a keg, which Howard filled with water from the stream near by. During their silent progress through the woods, Basil had carefully noted the way. Afraid to cry out, he concentrated all his energies upon learning the directions and the landmarks. When the pistol was covered from sight, Basil, relieved from the fear of immediate death, had bitterly accused Howard of assuming the name of Weston Allen to hide his crime. His captor stood stolid and unmoved under every accusation except that of not being Weston Allen. To be called "Howard" rendered him wild and savage, and in this condition he had struck his prisoner to earth and had beaten him without mercy. Not one blow did Basil forget.

Having no suspicion of Howard's diseased state of mind, Basil came to inevitable conclusions which fed his anger and his despair. Howard had deserted Ellen on the eve of their marriage because he did not love her; and when Ellen fled to him in her helplessness, he received her as a servant, because he did not love her. "I never wanted her," Howard said brutally; "she is nothing to me but a servant." Basil believed these words. In his imagination he saw his wife serving this cruel master, hiding in shame and terror from the world. That was well enough—but his son! what would be the future of his boy?

Perhaps Howard's identity would never be discovered. At Mope Point they believed him to be Weston Allen; the newspapers spoke of him as Weston Allen. He with the handcuffs upon his wrists, he with the chain binding him to a pillar of granite, was the only one with the power and desire to make known the truth. Basil felt this power was his, for he had not despaired utterly. The chain was light, and might, with persistency, be ground against the pillar till it would give way. The persistency was his, and day and night he wore away the stone, and found the link growing more fragile. And while he worked, and drank his water and ate his food as a dog, his craving for revenge grew stronger, and the way seemed more and more clear. During these days he found a vindictive pleasure in addressing his captor as "Howard Glen," and in assuring him that if liberated he would tell the world everything. He believed he knew why Howard was so angered by being called by his true name. It proved to him that Basil, though bound, was unconquered, and that only death could silence his accusing tongue. When Howard ceased to come, Basil believed Howard had at last resolved to employ that only means of silence. "I believe I will leave you here to die," had been among his enemy's last words. Basil regarded them as the threat of a would-be murderer. He laughed within himself, for he knew that soon he would be free. He treasured the food upon the ground, and when at last he could break the chain, though the last morsel had been consumed, he did not feel hunger. Delirious excitement drove from him the thought of food. Almost mad with joy, he sprang upon the hiding-place which had so long mocked him by its nearness. The key freed him from his bonds, and he found, as well, something of which the awakened Howard knew nothing—the pistol. He examined it carefully; it was in good condition and fully loaded.

Basil crept from the cave, looking stealthily about. It was morning. He was very weak, and stumbled as he made his way across the shelving ledges of rock to the woods. The thought of what he must do gave him unnatural strength. His memory furnished him with a map of the journey. He did not hesitate except when weariness forced him to the ground. Late in the day he reached the clearing before Howard's cabin. He crouched in a thicket and with blodoshot eyes glared across the space.. The cabin door was closed, and there was no sign of life.

It mattered not. Basil had nothing to do with the inmates of that cabin. It was his purpose to seek the officers of the law, and arrest Howard and Ellen. He felt that to slay Howard would be justifiable not only to his conscience, but to the judgment of the world. But Ellen's punishment must come through her child, not through Howard. He lingered for a possible glimpse of his victims, or of his son. Weak from his long walk, enfeebled by years of dissipation, faint for the want of food, he at last fell asleep. When he woke up it was near sunset. He lay for a few moments staring confusedly at the green trees above him, the thicket that embraced him, the patch of clear blue sky. Why was he not in the cave?

Suddenly he started up. That was Howard's cabin. The door stood open. Had he returned? Had she? He rose to his feet, and listened. He heard the voice of a little child. His heart bounded, his burning eyes filled with bitter tears. "My God!" he muttered, "what a failure my life has been—what a failure!"

He stretched out his arms toward the cabin, and a scream struggled to his lips. He repressed it. "My boy!" he whispered, "my loved one! my little darling!"

The distant voice rippled on. It broke into laughter. It gurgled, deep, rich, full. It was Ellen's voice in the throat of a child. It was the Ellen-laugh, which Ellen had forgotten. It brought before Basil's mind a girl in short dresses, golden-haired, dark gray-eyed, dimpled, satin-skinned. It brought to his mind the maiden whom, after years of waiting and alternate hope and despair, he had clasped to his heart as his wife. He muttered again, "What a failure! What a failure!" His arms still stretched toward the cabin in hopeless longing. He held them extended, as in a trance, till they fell of their own weight exhausted. As they fell, his softness passed away. "His servant!" he ground between his teeth. "I will see his servant, and his servant's child!" He strode into the opening. His hands were behind him, one clasping his weapon convulsively.

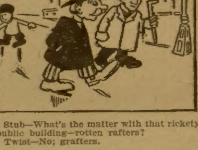
His glittering eyes found the group within. Ellen had her arm about Howard's neck as she clasped the boy to her bosom. Howard's arm was about her as in protection. Protection against whom?—her husband! Was it thus that Howard protected—his servant? Ah, no, it was not as a servant that Ellen Quiteron clung to Howard Glen!

Every thought of cool, calculated revenge was driven from Basil's mind. That clinging group was the inspiration of a purpose different from the half-frenzied husband's former resolve. As he slowly crossed the opening and vanished in the woods, the threat of death in his white, pinched face was but the reflection of the new purpose which had hardened his heart.

The conclusion of this highly interesting adventure will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. When subscribing be sure to ask for our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

◆

Worse.



Stub—What's the matter with that rickety public building—rotten rafters?

Twist—No; grafters.

◆

When two litigants in Siam contradict each other, and there is no witness to corroborate either, the judge orders both to plunge into deep water. The one who stays under the longest is adjudged the truth-teller, and wins the case.

Nine Nations

Now Use Liquozone. Won't You Try It—Free?

Millions of people, of nine different nations, are constant users of Liquozone. Some are using it to get well; some to keep well. Some to cure germ diseases; some as a tonic. No medicine was ever so widely employed. These users are everywhere; your neighbors and friends are among them. And half the people you meet—wherever you are—know some one whom Liquozone has cured.

If you need help, please ask some of these users what Liquozone does. Don't blindly take medicine for what medicine cannot do. Drugs never kill germs. For your own sake, ask about Liquozone; then let us buy you a full-size bottle to try.

We Paid $100,000

For the American rights to Liquozone. We did this after testing the product for two years, through physicians and hospitals, after proving, in thousands of difficult cases, that Liquozone destroys the cause of any germ disease.

Liquozone has, for more than 20 years, been the constant subject of scientific and chemical research. It is not made by compounding drugs, nor with alcohol. Its virtues are derived solely from gas—largely oxygen gas—by a process requiring immense apparatus and 14 days' time. The result is a liquid that does what oxygen does. It is a nerve food and blood food—the most helpful thing in the world to you. Its effects are exhilarating, vitalizing, purifying. Yet it is a germicide so certain that we publish on every bottle an offer of $1,000 for a disease germ that it cannot kill. The reason is that germs are vegetables; and Liquozone—like excess of oxygen—is deadly to vegetal matter.

There lies the great value of Liquozone. It is the only way known to kill germs in the body without killing the tissue, too. Any drug that kills germs is a poison and it cannot be taken internally. Every physician knows that medicine is almost helpless in any germ disease.

Germ Diseases.

These are the known germ diseases. All that medicine can do for these troubles is to help Nature overcome the germs, and such results are indirect and uncertain. Liquozone attacks the germs, wherever they are. And when the germs which cause a disease are destroyed, the disease must end, and forever. That is inevitable.

Asthma
Abscess—Anemia
Bronchitis
Blood Poison
Bright's Disease
Bowel Troubles
Coughs—Colds
Consumption
Colic—Croup
Constipation
Catarrh—Cancer
Dysentery—Diarrhea
Hay Fever—Influenza
Kidney Diseases
La Grippe
Liver Troubles
Malaria—Neuralgia
Many Heart Troubles
Piles—Pneumonia
Pleurisy—Quinsy
Rheumatism
Scrofula
Skin Diseases
Stomach Troubles
Dandruff—Dropsy
Dyspepsia
Eczema—Erysipelas
Fevers—Gall Stones
Goitre—Gout
Gonorrhea—Gleet
Throat Troubles
Tuberculosis
Tumors—Ulcers
Varicocele
Women's Diseases

All diseases that begin with fever—all inflammation—all catarrh—all contagious diseases—all the results of impure or poisoned blood.

In nervous debility Liquozone acts as a vitalizer, accomplishing what no drugs can do.

50c. Bottle Free.

If you need Liquozone, and have never tried it, please send us this coupon. We will then mail you an order on a local druggist for a full-size bottle, and we will pay the druggist ourselves for it. This is our free gift, made to convince you; to show you what Liquozone is, and what it can do. In justice to yourself, please, accept it to-day, for it places you under no obligation whatever.

Liquozone costs 50c and $1.

CUT OUT THIS COUPON

for this offer may not appear again. Fill out the blanks and mail it to The Liquozone Company, [illegible]-464 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

My disease is..............................

I have never tried Liquozone, but if you will supply me a 50c. bottle free I will take it.

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....

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M308 Give full address—write plainly.

Any physician or hospital not yet using Liquozone will be gladly supplied for a test.

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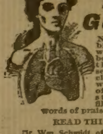
CONSUMPTION

CURED BY Lung-Germine



Not just one case alone but hundreds of cases where all hope had been given up, where the hand of Death seemed to have forever closed upon them. We will send you hundreds of letters from every state in the Union, filled with grateful words of praise for Lung-Germine.

READ THIS ONE.

Mr. Wm. Schmidt, of 1504 Cass Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., says: I had Consumption in its worst form and was given up to die. One day I saw your ad for Lung Germine, I sent for it. Doctors and friends laughed at me, but I was determined to try this medicine as a last resort to save my life because I had a family of eight children to care for. Today I am well and strong. If any one has a doubt about this statement I am able to furnish proofs from different hospitals and doctors and other reliable men.

We Guarantee to Cure

Consumption, Bronchitis and all Lung Troubles or we return every dollar of your money.

Lung-Germine, the great germ destroyer, was discovered by an old German doctor-scientist and has cured hundreds of cases of consumption, bronchitis, asthma and catarrh in Germany and in this country. It has stood the most rigid tests by noted physicians and has given positive proof that it kills the Tuberculosis germs of consumption and destroys absolutely every symptom of this fatal disease. It has revolutionized the treatment of consumption and removed it from the list of deadly, fatal diseases and placed it among the curable. This is an honest remedy that will cure you. If you have consumption or any of its symptoms, **coughing and hawking continually, spitting yellow and black matter, bleeding from the lungs, weak voice, flat chest, night sweats, flushed complexion, pain in chest, wasting away of flesh, etc.**

You may have a **FREE** treatment sent you at once together with a booklet on the treatment and care of consumption by simply sending in your name.

Don't Delay—Write To-day

Your life may be at stake. Your letter may save you months of torturing illness and prolong your life to a good old age. To wait means too late in many cases. Will you be one of these?

Lung-Germine Co., 36 Weber Blk. Jackson, Mich.

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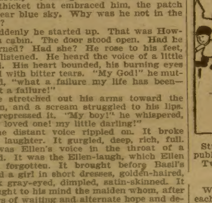

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WITH THE FOUR FREE CATALOGUES you will receive the most astonishing Buggy Offer ever heard of, a new and astonishing proposition. How others can offer top buggies at $21.00 to $23.00 and why we can sell at much lower prices than all others will be fully explained. We will explain why we ship so as to make freight charges amount to next to nothing. We will explain why we are the only makers or dealers in the world that can ship buggies the day we receive your order. Our Free Trial Offer, Our Pay After Received Terms, Our Binding Guarantee are all explained when we send you the FOUR FREE CATALOGUES.

HAVE YOU ANY USE FOR A BUGGY? If you have, don't fail to cut this ad. out today and mail to us. If you can't use a Top Buggy at any price, call your neighbor's attention to this announcement. Don't buy any kind of a buggy until after you cut this ad. out and send to us and get the Four Big Free Catalogues, the most liberal offer, the very latest proposition, everything explained, all free for the asking. Write today. **SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.**

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger. When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Paying the Penalty.

(Continued from page five.)

"Fortunate for me, then," said Earl, "that I remained in the bank until it was closed, and that Mr. Terry, Mr. Sloan, myself, and the porter departed in company."

"Yes," said Terry, "and a patrol wagon dashed by us ere we had covered a block."

"I saw you," said the inspector. "I was in the wagon. We were then on our way to the scene of the crime."

"Twenty thousand is a good haul for the highwayman, and a big loss," observed Mr. Kellogg.

"Oh, no loss to you," stated Agent Andrews. "You hold our receipt."

'It will be no loss to the company," the inspector said. "We will have the thief and money also, within twenty-four hours. Our whole detective force and half the police are on the case now."

"Might it not have been some hanger-on about Rogers' saloon who committed the crime?" asked Terry.

"No," said the inspector; "though the place is being investigated."

"Let us go, Mr. Andrews," he continued. "We can learn nothing here. I will drive over west and see the porter. I know where he resides. He may have noted some loiterer about the bank."

"He would have been more apt to do so than any other connected with it," observed Mr. Kellogg.

"You have a schedule of the bills that made up that package, Mr. Terry?"

"Why, yes, of the banks; but not as to the number engraved on the bills."

"No tracing the bills then. All the more importance of speedy action."

"I sincerely regret this misfortune has befallen your company, Mr. Andrews," said the banker at the outer door, "but——"

"Oh, my dear sir, I am aware of that," returned the agent. "Rest assured that we regard you as one of our best friends. Twenty thousand dollars will leave our office for the Central Bank of Milwaukee at 8 o'clock tonight, and though the package will not contain the bills Elsworth receipted for, I assure you the money will meet the demands of the Central's draft."

"Many thanks!" exclaimed the banker. "And any aid we can render you in bringing the wretch to the bar of justice and recovering the money, will be gladly rendered."

"I know it."

A moment later Andrews and the inspector were seated in their carriage, which passed from view as Robert entered the gate.

"Why, father, what——"

"Wait, boy; there is the bell summoning us to tea. I will have to go over it all at the table. Come."

As the party proceeded to the dining-room, even accompanied by Janette, Elinor Kellogg and her son managed to loiter behind.

There was an appearance of great anxiety on the part of the widow, but the smile and satisfied expression on the countenance of her son caused it to be dispersed in an instant, and as they entered the dining-room these three words nearly escaped the madam's lips:

"All is well."

This strange and unusual story will be continued in next week's Ledger, continuing and augmenting the strong interest awakened by the first chapters. Every reader who desires to subscribe for the Ledger is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

◆

Death on a Funeral Pyre.

British law has stamped out many cruel and barbarous customs and the crime of suttee, or widow burning, is usually included among the number. Occasionally, however, cases occur. An authenticated instance is reported from Behar, one of the districts of Bengal, chiefly noted for its indigo industry. Thirteen men were prosecuted on charges of culpable homicide or abetment of suicide. A realistic description of the grewsome scene was furnished by the deputy magistrate. In committing the accused to the Sessions court he said: "Though the thirteen accused committed for trial have been divided into distinct batches, the charges nevertheless are with reference to one and the same transaction. This was the immolation of a Hindoo widow on the funeral pyre of the deceased husband, or, as it is termed in the vernacular, a case of suttee, which may be described as a ghastly offense against nature, against humanity and the law of the land. Happily the offense is extremely rare. Indeed, it was hoped that this great blot on Hindoo rites and ceremonies had been effectually and permanently exterminated. It is therefore not a little startling to be thus presented with instances of a revival of the barbarism of the dark ages.

"There is evidence to show that one Chaudrhi Missir, alias Chatturbhuj Missir, a Brahman of Sanchari village, having died Oct. 18 last, arrangements were made for the cremation of his body at the 'devi sthan' of that place, on the banks of a small river. A place was cut in the ground in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross and the funeral pyre was built over it. The body being laid on the pyre, the widow, having bathed in the river and adorned herself as for her marriage, took her seat on the pyre and called on her son, the accused Juggernath Missir, to do his duty as a devout Hindoo. Juggernath lighted some wheat stocks and, having walked round the pyre three times, applied, according to custom, the fire to the mouth of the deceased. This failed to ignite the pyre and it is said that he and the four Brahmans accused—Balkishun Missir, Dwarka Missir, Ram Charan Missir and Lacman Towari—performed the humad, which consisted of the burning of incense and the placing of lighted chips of wood dipped in ghee (butter) under the pyre until it ignited.

"By this time a vast crowd had assembled. When the flames reached the widow she is said to have 'moved about,' or writhed, and finally stood up and turned toward the setting sun, but immediately fell back on the pyre, apparently overcome by the increasing flames. Amid cries of 'Sat Ram!' 'Sita Ram!' 'Sati Mai Ki Jai!' the beating of drums, the clang of cymbals and blowing of the sank, or shell, she was burned to ashes with the corpse of her husband."

A unanimous verdict of guilty was returned against the following, who were sentenced to the various terms of imprisonment mentioned: Juggernath Missir, five years' rigorous imprisonment; Balkishun, three years; Dwarka, three years; Ram Charan, one and a half years; Somar Choukidar, one year; Gunga and Dilchand Chamars, nine months each. The rest were found not guilty.

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WE PAY THE FREIGHT and will send you the Couch, Dishes, Rocker (or whichever other premium you may select) together with the groceries, etc. We will trust you & allow you to pay us for the goods after you have delivered same. We have not space enough here to show all the Handsome Premiums we are distributing, but our CATALOGUE, which we will gladly mail you FREE, illustrates & describes many other premiums such as Toilet Sets, China Tea and Dinner Sets, Ladies' Desks, Linen Table Cloths, Parlor Lamps, Stoves, Morris Chairs, Rockers, Couches, Centre Tables, Iron & Brass Beds, Musical Instruments, Cloaks, Silverware, Sewing Machines, Dining Tables, Kitchen Cabinets, Bed Room Suits, Curtains, Rugs, Chiffoniers, Watches, Cutlery, Skirts, etc.

This Handsome Sideboard & Rich Gold & Floral Decorated China Dinner Set as shown above FREE for only 10 days work.

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◆

The Costliest Books.

In one of the London salesrooms the other day a book was sold for $20,000. It was a Latin psalter of 1459 and the price was the second highest ever given in auction for a printed book. The record price for a book printed with movable types is $25,750, given at the same rooms Dec. 19, 1884, at the Sir John Hayford Thorold sale, for another and slightly finer copy of the same work, the second book printed with a date at the world's first printing press.

The last-mentioned copy remained in the possession of its purchased, the late Bernard Quaritch, for a long period, and was finally sold after his death to J. Pierpont Morgan. Twelve copies, perfect and imperfect, are now known of the psalter of 1459, of which an edition of twenty copies was printed by Fust and Schoeffer at the expense of the Carthusian monastery of St. James, near [illegible]

The copy just sold for $20,000 was discovered [illegible] in the library of Count Wilhelm von Westerholt-Gysenberg, in the castle of Freienthun, near Klagenfurt, in Carinthia. It came into that family's possession on the dissolution of the monastery of St. James in 1781.

◆

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Small Harold, after sizing up the new baby, said: "Well, that kid hasn't got any hair to comb, but he's got an awful lot of face to be washed."

Mamma—Do you love your teacher, Tommy?

Tommy—Yes, mamma; but I don't want you to tell her.

Mamma—Why not?

Tommy—'Cause she might sue me for breach of promise.

—

Visitor—Well, my little man, have you any brothers?

Bright Boy—Yes, ma'am; I have one, but my sister has two.

Visitor—Why, how's that?

Bright Boy—She has me and my brother.

"Why, Nellie," said a mother to her small daughter, "you never saw me act naughty as you have been acting."

"Of course not," replied Nellie. "I'm too much of a lady to notice such things."

◆

How Far to Atoms?

Maw Hoptoad—Hiram, how fur away from here is Atoms?

Paw Hoptoad—Atoms? I never heerd of the place; what about it?

Maw Hoptoad—The paper says that yiddy Abner Smith wuz blown to Atoms.

◆

Monkeys would be ashamed to claim some men as ancestors.

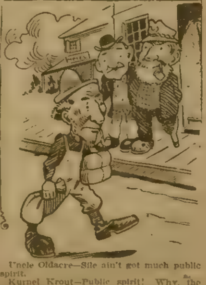
All Under a Cloud.

"Mercy, how dark it is getting!" exclaimed Miss Reclest.

"Yes, we are all under a cloud, you know, since father went into politics," replied the Illinois statesman's wife.

◆

Beneath Respect.



Uncle Oldacre—She ain't got much public spirit.

Kurnel Krout—Public spirit! Why, the blame fool ain't even got no kick on the legislatur'.

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

HEARTS OF OAK;

Or, In the Days of Washington.

[Copyright by the Author.]

Begun in No. 7, Feb. 18. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XII.

A NARROW ESCAPE FOR GEN. HOWE.

"What do you wish with me, sirrah?" demanded the officer, presently.

"Yeou are tew get up and dress while we cover every move, and depend on it, General Howe, having placed aour lives in peril tew reach this place, we air ready to destroy yeou before allowing ourselves tew be cut daown. If we die it will be after yeou have had yeour brains blown out," said Nathan.

"Curse you for an impudent rebel!"

"That kind of language will do no good, sir, and may bring abaout yeour death. Please get up, therefore, and dress—here air yeour small clothes and coat as well. It is very cold outside, General."

"Do you mean, sirrah, that I am to accompany you from this house?"

"That is the idea, sir."

"And whence would you take me, pray?" he sneered.

Perhaps the soldier was fencing for time, or it might be he had some natural curiosity with regard to the outcome of this most strange adventure, the like of which had never before come within range of his observation.

Nathan was in a hurry, but at the same time he knew he must gratify this desire up to a certain point.

So he answered again.

"General George Washington is anxious tew have an interview with General Howe, and he sends us hither with an urgent invitation."

"But the night—think how stormy it is!" said the other, falling into the humor of the thing for a brief time.

"For that we air sorry, General, but it cain't be helped. Now, kindly begin tew dress, sir, for it would be a shame tew compel a gentleman like yeou tew cross the river without his great-coat on."

"Then this is not a rude jest—you are serious about it?"

"It is as near tew death as yeou have ever approached in all the course of yeour life, sir. Come, come, General, we insist."

"I must say that I admire your pluck, gentlemen, for I believe there are two of you prodding me in the neck with your infamous pistols; but suppose you change your mind about forcing me to go out in all this storm—on my part I give you my solemn word to lie here a full hour and take no means of calling an alarm. Your plan could never be carried out, I assure you."

"Sir, we have sworn tew bring you, or the British army will be without a head this coming mornin. For the last time, I beg of yeou tew arise and dress."

No doubt about this time those cold muzzles again touched the nape of the soldier's neck, and the horrible suggestiveness caused him to shiver.

He also swore, softly, it is true, as though fearful or irritating these terrible men who, like the Roman youth of old who thrust his hand in the blaze until it was charred in order to convince the leader of the besieging host that those who had sworn to have his life knew not the meaning of the word "fear," were ready to stand torture and even death in the endeavor to assist their bleeding country.

Nevertheless, he made a move and gained the floor.

No man ever dressed under conditions less productive of pleasure.

He knew that at no instant could he be sure that a loaded weapon was not being held very close to his head; and his movements were very deliberate, lest he by some incautious action hasten the impening catastrophe.

Nathan continued to urge him to greater diligence, though without much effect.

To Roger, standing guard over the illustrious prisoner, seconds were like hours, and minutes seemed eternities.

He wondered what would be the end of all this strange chapter of events.

The sheer audacity of the thing appalled him, now that they were fully embarked in the enterprise. He feared that they must presently be in the condition of men who had come into possession of a white elephant which they were disbarred from selling, and could not afford to feed.

Finally it would appear that the officer had found all his various garments, and might be said to be in condition to venture forth.

He would doubtless have given all he was worth for the privilege of shouting at the top of his voice—of calling upon his guards to rush to the rescue; but this he dared not risk.

Something in the voice of the unseen man by whom his movements were being ordered told him that if he ventured to do this it would be the very last time his voice would ever be heard on earth.

What man can deliberately call down upon himself the decree of fate, when by simply holding his tongue he may escape and live?

Roger thought he heard the other chuckling once or twice, and a dreadful suspicion began to grip his heart in its cold talons. What was there in the situation to arouse hilarity? When the General did speak it was to mutter anathemas—why should he be secretly amused while openly expressing his dissatisfaction at the humiliation put upon him as a soldier?

"Sir, air yeou ready?" demanded Nathan, at last.

"I am dressed fully, if that is what you mean, but I must protest against such a scurvy trick, which could only originate in the brain of a pothouse schemer. I will accompany you if so be you mean to murder me in case I resist; but the consequences of this miserable game may not be to your liking, sirs!"

Nathan cared little for his protests providing they went no further than words. He could stand any amount of hard language if only the grand end for which he had dared all might be attained.

Another critical phase of the affair had been reached.

They must now get their prisoner down to the door, outside the mansion, and across the intervening ground to where the boat awaited them under the shelter of the butternut trees.

At any moment a sullen fit might overcome the officer, causing him to refuse to budge another foot. What to do under such conditions was a puzzle, although Nathan did not apparently allow such possibilities to worry him.

He had slipped his arm within that of the soldier, just as though they were boon companions, reeling home after a supper of game and wine.

But that his vigilance was not relaxed a particle could be understood, for he constantly pressed his attentions upon the General, playfully poking him in the shorter ribs with some blunt-nosed object which could only be one of the flint-lock pistols he carried.

Roger opened the door.

He looked out.

The hall was just as devoid of human occupancy as before, so that the occasion seemed right for their issuing forth.

As he saw the two come out of the darkness into the faint glow of that lighted hall Roger found himself fairly glued to the floor with astonishment

What was this he saw? Unless General Howe had changed his appearance most wonderfully since holding that consultation with his officers on the preceding night, this party could not be the British commander at all. They must have made a grievous mistake, entering the wrong room.

The soldier had known it all along, and for purposes of his own allowed them to keep right on, believing that in so doing he might be serving his General, and placing these audacious schemers in a bad box.

Nathan saw how his friend and comrade was glaring at the face of the man at whose side he stalked, and immediately he too cast a quick glance upward.

The truth staggered him somewhat; he had fancied things were going along so smoothly with them.

At the same time Nathan was a man who could not be easily dismayed.

He knew their game was a wreck, that the fat was in the fire, and now all that remained to them was to escape with what honors they might.

Was this officer of sufficient importance to warrant their attempting to transport him to the American camp?

Such a feat would be better than nothing, and it would at least prove to the British commander that his foes were ready to attempt any desperate act in order to win the victory.

However, they were saved all anxiety on this score, and the doughty officer who had played his part with such skill was relieved of the necessity of taking that cold voyage against his will.

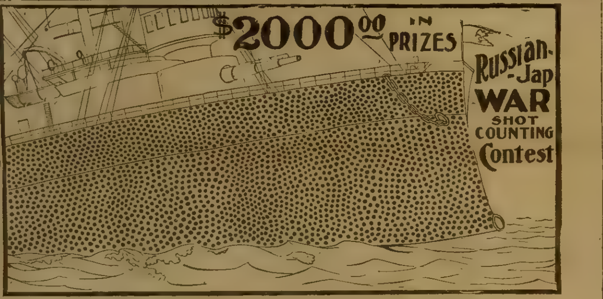
At this very moment, before Nathan could utter a word, the sound of a door opening was heard, and a man's head appeared in view, surmounted by a nightcap such as they were accustomed to wear in those days, when houses could not be heated like the present.

"Colonel, is that you? It is time the two messengers left on horseback, with my—— What are you doing dressed? And who are these men? Where is my guard?" exclaimed this newcomer on the scene.

It was General Howe himself, anxious about some important dispatches that must be started before the dawn came.

Nathan left the care of the prisoner to his comrade and made one spring in the direction of the General. His appearance was so wild and filled with suggestions that naturally enough General Howe did not wait for him to come up, but dodged back again behind the door, which he instantly slammed shut; and just as Nathan, advancing like a hurricane, came within reach of the same they plainly heard a stout bar drop into place.

Whereupon the excited voice of the commander-in-chief could be heard as he shout-


$2000.00 IN PRIZES
Russian-Jap WAR SHOT COUNTING Contest

HOW MANY HOLES IN THE BATTLESHIP?

THE HOMEMAKER will give to those who can count the shell holes in this Battleship correctly or nearest correctly a valuable list of Prizes.

IF YOU COUNT AND PLAN YOU MAY WIN

This is not a lottery but a problem. The contest consists of counting the SHELL HOLES in the battleship. Every dot counts. Do not miss any. There are no shell holes below the water line. All of them are plainly seen. All are shown on this side of the Battle Ship. There is no deception or catch about this contest whatsoever. If you can count the holes or dots correctly and give a good plan of counting them YOU SHOULD WIN. You stand as good a chance as any one of winning. It is worth trying.

The list of prizes is large. They are worth working for. You have a large number of chances. You are as likely as anybody to get first, but if you don't get first Prize there are lots of other prizes worth having. It all depends upon you. IF YOU CAN COUNT AND THINK UP A GOOD PLAN YOU ARE LIKELY TO WIN.

Do not fail to get counts in AT ONCE because we offer an EXTRA CASH prize for early counts as follows:

$50.00 CASH EXTRA PRIZE to the person sending in the best count or plan by April 30th, now remember, if you send best count or plan before April 30, you get $50.00 extra which is IN ADDITION to the regular list of 39 prizes.

DOUBLE EXTRA PRIZE: We believe everybody should have three counts so they can have one each side of what they think is correct to be more sure to hit it. To encourage this we will give another $50.00 extra to winners of 1st Prizes if they have three counts. Remember if you have one count you get 1st prize only, but if you have three counts you get $50.00 extra.

LIST OF PRIZES

1st Prize—$900 Piano
2nd Prize 600 Piano
3rd Prize 100 in cash
4th Prize 75 in cash
5th Prize Genuine Diamond Ring or Pin
6th Prize Solid Gold Watch and Chain (any style or movement)
7th Prize $50.00 Cash
8th Prize Genuine Diamond Ring or Pin (Diamond ½ size of 5th Prize)
9th Prize Gold filled Watch and Chain (any style or movement)
10th Prize Choice of high grade Sewing Machine or Bicycle (any style)
11th Prize $25.00 Cash
12th Prize Choice of Columbia Graphophone or 56 Piece China Dinner or Tea Set
13th Prize $15.00 Cash
14th Prize Choice of Upholstered Parlor Couch or Double Barrel Shot Gun
15th Prize $10.00 Cash
16th Prize Choice of 8 day Mantel Clock or set of one doz. Knives and Forks, Roger Bros. Silverware
17th Prize $5.00 in Cash
18th Prize $4.00 in Cash
19th Prize $3.00 in Cash

20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th 37th, 38th, 39th, $2.50 CASH EACH, making a total of 39 Grand Prizes, representing over $2,000 in cash and premium prizes.

CONDITIONS: Every count must be accompanied by subscription for THE HOMEMAKER, 50 cts. pays for one year and one count. $1.00 pays for two years and three counts. See conditions below.

CONDITIONS OF THIS CONTEST: 50 cents pays for one full year's subscription to THE HOMEMAKER and entitles you to one free count; $1.00 pays for two years and entitles you to three counts and makes you eligible for the special $50.00 Prize.

AWARDS will be made as follows: The person giving correct or nearest correct count will get first prize. Next nearest correct, second prize, etc. In case of a tie for any prize it will be awarded to the person giving best plan for counting the shell holes. In the event more than one person should submit the same plan and this was considered the best plan by the judges, each person so tieing will be asked to tell in 50 words how best to improve THE HOMEMAKER. The one making best suggestions will be awarded first prize, next best next, etc.

JUDGES. The awarding of the prizes in this contest will be entirely in the hands of a committee of three disinterested judges as follows: Rev. Dean Duffy of the Wabash Ave., Episcopal Church, 3417 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Dr. Chas. C. Smith, M. D. & D. S., 1664 North Clark St., Chicago, and Judge Willis Melville, Grossdale, Ill. The reputation and standing of these three professional men is irreproachable and absolutely insures the honest and fair distribution of the prizes. MOREOVER, no one living in Chicago or anyone connected in any way, shape or manner with THE HOMEMAKER or our publishing house will be permitted to even participate in this contest. We are bound that our contest must be absolutely fair.

OUR FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY as to whether we are abundantly able to do as we say and distribute the Prizes offered, we can refer you to any firm in Chicago. If you have some friend or relation in Chicago have them look us up. We can also refer to the publishers of this paper, to any of the large Mercantile Agencies of America. We are an old established Publishing House, incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois for $10,000.00. The total number of readers of our paper number 3,700,000. We will also state that we have distributed over $10,000.00 in Prizes during the past year. Our offer will be carried out to the letter. This contest closes June 30th, 1905, but get your counts in early.

READ THIS CAREFULLY

See extra $50.00 Prize offered to early counters before April 30th. Anybody having 3 counts entered may enter additional counts at 25c each. Be careful to give your plan of counting, as the best plan used will decide all ties. ANSWERS FROM PEOPLE LIVING IN CHICAGO POSITIVELY NOT ACCEPTED. NO COUNTS ACCEPTED WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION. Do not delay. Get your counts in early. See extra $50.00 Prizes for early answers and to those having 3 counts registered. REMEMBER 50 cents pays for one year's subscription and one count free and $1.00 pays a two year subscription and three counts. Cut out and send subscription on blank below. Give your counts and plans on a separate sheet, with your name and address plainly written. Enclose all in the same envelope and address as follows: THE HOMEMAKER, Contest Dept. 173 63-69 Washington St., Chicago.

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THOSE WHO HAVE WON BEFORE

We have distributed over $10,000.00 in prizes during the past year. We publish as follows the names and addresses of a few only of the lucky persons who have won in our previous contests.

Mrs. A[illegible] Lautenschlager, Carleton, Mich. Won $[illegible] Piano.

Mr. Bertie E. Thayer, Westboro, Mass. Won $50.00 Cash Prize.

Mrs. [illegible], Jefferson, Iowa. Won $[illegible] Cash Prize.

Wm. N. Atkins, Suspension Bridge N. Y. Won Gold Watch & Chain.

B. E. Thayer Westboro, Mass. $50.00; L. B. Gardner, Atlantic, Iowa, $30.00; Miss Jennie Smith, Edon Ohio $25.00; E. B. Crocket So Paris Maine, $[illegible]; John R. Benson, Mt Morris, Mich. $15.00; Geo C Price Oregon Mo., $10.00; Miss Ava F Lautenschlager Carleton Mich., $300 Piano; Mrs. A. B. Campbell, Jefferson, Iowa $150.00; Jas H. Evans New Orleans, La., $[illegible]; Daniel R. Bush, Camden, N. J. diamond ring; Wm. N. Atkins, Suspension Bridge N. Y., gold watch and chain; Wm. Cary, Siloam Springs Ark., $[illegible]; A. Lee Boyd, Bristow, Ind Ter. $[illegible]; Mrs. [illegible] Andrews Murray, Box 164, Kansas City, Kans., $50.00; Harry R. Shaw, Ladora, Iowa, $10.00; George S. Salazar St Johns, Ariz. $10.00; Wm. H. Jackson 9 Stuyvesant Ave Arlington, N. J., $10.00; Mrs. F. C. Eyer, Bloomsburg Pa., $10.00; Mrs. R. D. Woodworth Geneva, Ohio, $10.00; Wm. Batten Madison Ohio $16.66; Zena Ashford, Ashford, Wash. $16.66; J. C. Hoover, Chillicothe, Ohio, $16.66; Edmund Currier, Gardner, Mass., $16.66; Mrs. M. C. Womack, Hayford, Cal.

These and many other prizes have been distributed by us all during the past year. If you doubt our honesty in the least or the fact that our contests are conducted absolutely fairly, you can write any of the persons whose name and address we give above and ask them if they did not receive the prizes stated. We can also furnish you the names of hundreds of our other prize winners, if you desire them.

Address all letters, subscriptions and counts to

THE HOMEMAKER, Contest Dept. 173 63-69 Washington Street, CHICAGO, ILL.

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ed in a tone loud enough to awaken the whole house.

It was evidently time the two patriots were going.

Their business in this quarter was finished—success had for some reason refused to settle upon their banner, and now if they wished to save their own lives they must make haste.

They no longer had any time for the man who had dressed under their pistols.

He had played his little part in the farce, and saved his General some loss of prestige if not his liberty. Let him go.

"Come, lad!" exclaimed the Yankee.

"I beg of you to stay," said the officer, making a clutch for Roger; but falling back in dismay when he found himself confronted by a weapon, and in the determined face of the young fellow read his intention to shoot if it became necessary.

Together the two sprang down the wide stairs.

The whole house was in an uproar, with men shouting and doors banging, so that it must be impossible to understand just what was the matter for some little time.

This was to their advantage.

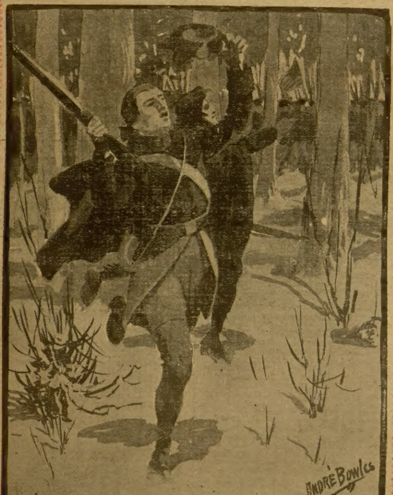
Even seconds counted when they were racing for their lives.

The benefit of having left the front door on the latch became apparent since they were saved the job of groping their way along that narrow hallway to the side exit.

Nathan gave the door one fling and was out, with Roger close at his heels.

A pistol was fired from the top of the stairs, possibly by their friend the officer, whom they had aroused from his slumber so unceremoniously, under the impression that he was Howe; but the bullet did no harm, at least neither of the runners was wounded.

Across the open they fled, turning again toward the stables, for it had been planned that in case of being frustrated in their daring design, and forced to take to flight, they would endeavor to seize upon a couple of horses that were being saddled at the time they quitted the stables, and thus be in condition to dash down the road toward Trenton, hoping to join Washington ere the latter once more crossed the Delaware.



Roger took off his hat and shouted aloud.

CHAPTER XIII.

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

Of course Nathan was keenly disappointed at the failure of their plan.

Things had seemed so favorable, too, that their hopes were buoyed up to a very high pitch.

That would naturally make the tumble all the more exasperating.

It was not a time to bemoan the ill-luck that had attended their effort to influence General Howe that their side of the river was the better; indeed, both of the fugitives found their energies fully employed in pursuing the hastily agreed upon plan of escape.

The words let fall by the General gave them to understand why the two horses were being saddled in front of the stables at the time of their departure from that quarter a brief time back.

And if they had their way in the matter those same messengers whom Howe depended on to carry his dispatches would be minus their mounts when they issued forth to obey orders.

The racket over at that fine old mansion was something tremendous by this time. Windows were hastily thrown up, and some one amused himself in banging away several times with a complement of horse-pistols that made a very big bark but somehow failed to wing the runners—though with a thin veil of snow shutting them out, as well as the screen fashioned by the darkness, that sort of random shooting was not apt to bring about results.

Those at the stables must assuredly wonder what all this racket signified.

Perhaps they might even object to giving up the horses to those who were not authorized to receive the same.

It must be then that they resort to something a little more powerful than mere lip argument; and consequently some one was apt to get hurt.

As they turned so as to reach the front of the outbuildings our friends saw that the horses were still there, in charge of a couple of grooms, who, from their actions were in the act of leading the beasts once again inside, puzzled and worried because of the clamor beyond.

They immediately found themselves confronted by two disreputable-looking refugees, upon whose garments the wisps of hay still clung tenaciously, and who roared at them to deliver up the nags instantly, unless they longed to feel the contents of the pistols which were aimed to cover them.

It was a situation calling for the exercise of considerable diplomacy, if those fellows were to save the beasts and their own precious skins as well.

Neither was equal to the task, however much they might have enjoyed taking a tumble out of these unknown tramps, who dared order them around with quite as much authority as though they were in command of the army.

Choice there was none, could be none under the circumstances. Haste was the only thing that entered into consideration, and there was precious lots of that needed to be sure.

Buckskin, black or gray, it mattered naught to Roger what the color of his mount might be. Ungainly or with the proportions of a Virginia thoroughbred—what did he care so long as he was granted the privilege of throwing a leg across the saddle, and feeling the beast cavort under his weight.

It took them a matter of just about three seconds to thus gain their seats. Few could have accomplished the act in a more speedy fashion.

Immediately they dug their heels into the sides of the animals, which shot away as though fired from a cannon.

Now Roger led the way for once.

When it came to a question of a knowledge concerning the immediate neighborhood he unquestionably knew their surroundings better than the Yankee, thanks to the fact of his having spent some years of his younger life about Trenton and the Delaware River region.

A dozen long reaches on the part of their steeds and they were on the post-road, headed toward Trenton, distant some miles.

Between there would be some pickets to pass, and perhaps in some places they might have to take exceedingly slender chances in declining to stop when so ordered; but little they cared. The night had been given over to dare-devil deeds, and now that dawn was at hand they might as well top off the series with one grand climax.

Besides, both of them were smarting under

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the chagrin of having made a failure of the hazard, and in this humor counted nothing too bold for their humor.

One of the men at the stables must have gotten hold of a musket, for while they were still within shooting distance they heard a tremendous discharge behind them, and detected the peculiar zip-flap of the lead as it hurtled past; fortunately without interfering with their flight.

It would take some time to bring order out of chaos in the region of the General's headquarters. Then other horses must be brought out and saddled, with the chances of their being only half rested.

Really, neither of the patriots saw reason to to feel any particular fear in connection with what lay behind. If they could be as well assured as to the perils that stretched along their road to Trenton they must be in a condition of mind to rejoice.

Keen though the wind was as it swooped down upon them, yet they rejoiced in the fact of its presence, since favored by the disagreeable weather, screened in a measure by the curtain of shifting sleet, they might flash past some of the picket stations unseen by the guards until it was too late.

The first experience came a brief time after breaking away from the stable where the start was made.

Fires were discovered on one side of the road, and it became evident that a detachment of the British army must be stationed here in order to cover a certain point deemed vulnerable by the commander.

"Lie low in the saddle!" cried Nathan, bending forward until his face was in the midst of his horse's flying mane.

Roger knew what this meant—that they would immediately be the object of a fusillade, the noise back at the mansion puting the soldiers of the bivouac on the mettle.

The challenge broke out sharp and clear.

Nathan answered it with a fiendish yell, as if hoping to rattle the guard, and render their aim less exact.

At the same time he dug his heels viciously into the sides of his animal, in order to make the beast give a frantic leap, by means of which he expected to avoid the shower of missiles certain to be sent out by the waiting enemy.

Roger gave a cry of chagrin when he realized that the devoted Yankee had purposely pushed his horse into the lead with the intention of drawing the fire of the guard, thus screening his young companion.

At the same time, strange to say it angered Roger to know this. He felt that he was entitled to his share of the risk, and this usurpation of his rights made him feel as though Nathan considered him a mere boy. Truth to tell, the kind-hearted Yankee looked deeper into these things. He had nothing to live for in this world save a little debt of revenge which soon promised to be wiped out; while Roger was young, with a future before him; if one fell, far better that it should be he whose candle had nearly burned down to the socket.

The ruse worked to a charm, too.

Of course those on guard did not know how may were rushing down upon them, and finding that their challenge was unanswered they banged away after the phantom horseman who had flashed by, and then scrambled out of the way of what was coming after.

Their aim was bad, owing to haste and anxiety combined. At least Nathan seemed to keep right along, though Roger felt his heart rise up in his throat, figuratively speaking, when that crash told of a volley.

Keeping madly on, he by degrees picked up the other.

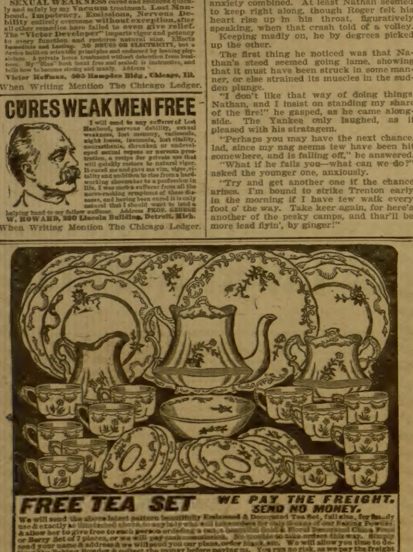
The first thing he noticed was that Nathan's steed seemed going lame, showing that it must have been struck in some manner, or else strained its muscles in the sudden plunge.

"I don't like that way of doing things, Nathan, and I insist on standing my share of the fire!" he gasped, as he came alongside. The Yankee only laughed, as if pleased with his stratagem.

"Perhaps you may have the next chance, lad, since my nag seems tew have been hit somewhere, and is falling off," he answered.

"What if he fails you—what can we do?" asked the younger one, anxiously.

"Try and get another one if the chance arises. I'm bound to strike Trenton early in the morning if I have tew walk every foot o' the way. Take keer again, for here's another of the pesky camps, and thar'll be more lead flyin', by ginger!"



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CHAPTER XIV.

THE ALARM DRUMS.

Once again they found themselves under fire, though on this second occasion it chanced that the two flying patriots had passed a given spot before the British patrol hurrying up could get in position to head them off.

Consequently the chances of their being cut down were lessened to a considerable degree.

Nathan showed much more anxiety with regard to the safe passage of his companion through this plunging fire than in connection with his own affairs.

"Haow goes it, younker?" he called aloud, just as soon as they were clear of the second camp.

"No harm done," replied Roger, as cheerily as he could, considering the mad pace at which they were bounding along, and the wind that drove straight into their teeth.

No more was said, since talking under such discouragements was impossible, at least with any degree of comfort.

Sometimes the sound of their horses' hoofs beat like a tattoo upon clear sections of the road. Again when they plunged into snow the percussion was muffled, so that it might not have been heard fifty paces away.

Roger knew they were being favored in several ways.

For instance, the wind carried sounds backward, so that those with whom they had to run the gauntlet along the road to Trenton were as a rule not made aware of their coming until the emergency was almost upon them.

Trouble was coming, however.

Nathan's mount began to show more positive signs of giving out, though the beast possessed considerable pluck, and made a gallant fight.

"Hold hard, lad," said the Yankee finally, pulling in gradually until the two of them had come to a full stop.

Roger knew what this meant. Their little run in the direction of Trenton must come to an end, unless they could by rare good luck discover another beast that might be borrowed.

Friend or foe, it would make little difference to men in such a desperate position. And should this fail them, why, they had the means of coming at their intended destination afoot.

True, the walking was not everything that might be desired, but those who are used to roughing it seldom enter a complaint against the weather, taking what Providence sees fit to send, with thanks.

Roger looked around to locate himself.

"What's that over yonder?" he asked, in surprise.

"I kinder guess it's day peekin' above the horizon, though it beats me haow the pesky thing comes so quick. Mebbe I slept an hour that I forgot tew count."

That was Nathan's arch way of confessing that the blunder must be laid at his door.

This might alter the complexion of things somewhat, for possibly the risk would be too great should daylight actually arrive, to admit of their running wildly along the guarded road on horseback; and the aim of those who opened fire upon them was apt to improve decidedly.

The thing could be better done on foot.

Nathan's first thought was to examine into the nature of the wound which his steed had received.

He understood immediately that all hope of using the animal further was out of the question.

"Looks like we will walk," he remarked, quietly.

Roger was listening.

"We are followed!" he exclaimed, as a lull in the wind permitted him to distinctly catch the heavy grinding of many horses' hoofs, though the sound immediately died away again.

"And close at hand, tew. Come, we must make a plunge intew the timber, and let the critters go past," cried Nathan.

No sooner said than done.

Fortunately the woods were friendly, and offered splendid shelter, so that while they did not go over a dozen paces, owing to the gloom that still hung over the scene, and the drifting snow, their presence would never be suspected.

There was one danger that menaced them. What if one of their horses, recognizing some companion in the ranks of those who came on, should start to whinny in a friendly way, as so frequently happens?

Nathan covered this possibility, as he did the majority of impending evils, by a judicious exercise of wisdom.

"Take hold of the beast's nose, and if he tries tew give tongue cut him off short," he said, hastily.

Whoever the hard riders might be, they were by this time almost on a line with the twain crouching there in the snowy woods—the whole bunch coming down the road rat-a-plan with a swinging movement that told of long familiarity with horses.

There seemed to be some six or seven in the squad, and Roger never thought of questioning that they were looking for signs of the two daring rebels who had created such a riot around headquarters.

He was pleased to see them swing past

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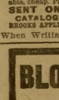

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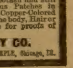

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looking like ghostly riders in the dim uncertain light. Let them continue at this booming pace until at some picket further along the road they learned that those whom they sought had not passed that way.

What would happen then could be easily guessed; but as our friends did not contemplate remaining where they were one second longer than could be helped, it might not matter much to them, and the fellows were privileged to search the forest at their pleasure.

Their calculations of a nice comfortable departure from this point were, however, all upset.

Borne back by the wind they heard a sharp voice call out: "Halt!" and then the onrushing cluster of horsemen drew rein.

"The meat's in the fire, younker. We've got tew leave the hosses here, and cut for it through the woods!" ejaculated Nathan.

It seemed that another picket guard was stationed just a little way along the road, so that had they continued their flight they must have run plump into new peril, from which at least the sudden giving out of Nathan's steed had saved them.

Thus does apparent evil turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

Those fellows were evidently on the alert, waiting to give them a warm reception, as could be judged from the manner in which they held up the pursuing squad.

Doubtless they had heard the coming of the fugitives, and would so inform the hard riders, who might jump to the conclusion that they had passed those they sought on the road, and not far away, either.

Nathan never spoke a truer word than when he thus declared they would have to desert the horses and make off through the snow forest; for in a very short time there would be quite a hustle around that quarter, with soldiers running hither and yon, looking for traces by means of which the two patriots could be tracked to earth.

There was one good thing about this plunge through the wood. It warmed them up more or less, so that they no longer shivered every time an especially sturdy swoop of the cutting wind bore down upon them.

Nathan was a stubborn chap.

They might readily have made for the river, with the hope of crossing in some manner; but since abandoning their game to get General Howe in their clutches he seemed possessed of a most determined wish to join forces with the American army before the raid had been fashioned into history.

And so nothing would do him but that they keep on in the direction of the town. There might be a dozen or two British camps lying between, but some means would be found for passing around such obstacles. Where there's a will there's a way; and such determined fellows could not be easily driven back.

By and by they came once more upon the road, but as the dawn was now breaking it was deemed too risky to take advantage of the highway, so that back into the woods they went, skirting the thoroughfare when possible, and continually drawing nearer the town of Trenton.

Roger was constantly listening with an eagerness that made him tremble.

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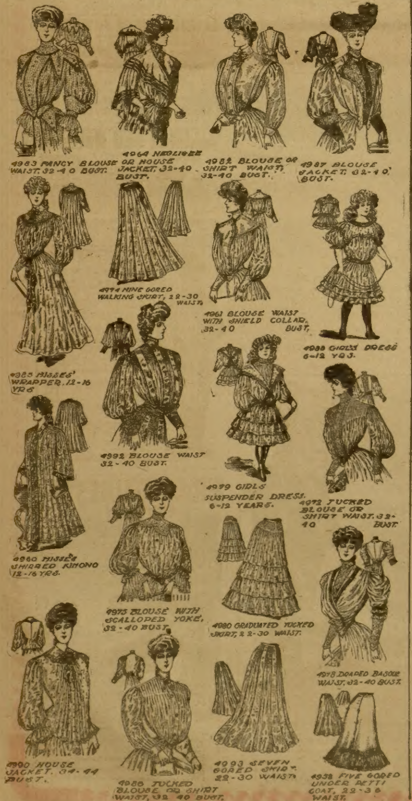
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Elsie—I know it, but papa says I must learn or I'll miss all the bargain-sale advertisements in the papers.

—

Harold, aged 5, had met with an accident.

"I'm afraid," asid the doctor, "that a permanent scar will remain on your chin."

"Oh, my whiskers will soon cover it up," answered the small optimist.

—

Harry—Say, papa, is a man's wife his better half?

Papa—That is the popular belief.

Harry—Then what part of Solomon was all his wives?

—

The mother had just given the twins a bath and put them to bed.

By and by one of them began to laugh.

"What's so funny?" asked the mother.

"You made a mistake," explained little Joe, "an' give Fred two baths an' didn't give me any."

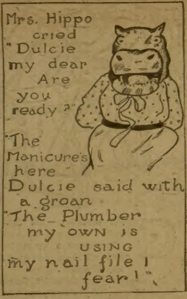
—

Papa (looking over school report)—How is this, Johnny? According to the report you are at the foot of a class of seven pupils.

Johnny—Well, it might have been worse!

Papa—I fail to see how it could have been any worse.

Johnny—Why, there might have been more pupils in the class.


Mrs. Hippo cried "Dulcie my dear Are you ready?"
"The Manicure's here" Dulcie said with a groan "The Plumber my own is using my nail file I fear!"

Edith's Manners.

Edith Dale was a very polite little girl, so polite that her mother was the envy of all the other mothers in the neighborhood. Edith could always be counted on to say "Yes, please," and "No, thank you," in exactly the right place. Edith's mother was proud in consequence, as she should be. One day, alas, Mrs. Dale's pride had a fall—and before Aunt Margaret, too! The very aunt of all others whom Mrs. Dale was anxious should admire Edith. It happened this way. Edith was dining at Aunt Margaret's house. Aunt Margaret was tall, severe, prim, and altogether unlovely as far as looks went. In the middle of dinner something happened to call Aunt Margaret away from the table. Of course she politely inquired of her guests, "Will you excuse me?"

"Certainly," piped out Edith, and then added with unnecessary emphasis, "with the greatest of pleasure."

The Sun in the Slums.

In the course of her experience as a teacher on New York's East Side Myra Kelley once received the following composition from an 8-year-old child upon the comparative importance of the sun and the moon:

"The moon is of great use, for it lights up the dark nights, but the sun is not much use, for the days are always light anyway."

FUNNY OLD WOMAN.

There was an old woman,
And what do you think?
She lived upon nothing
But paper and ink!
'Tis a diet of culture,
The old lady said,
And I've always digested
Each book that I've read.

The Rainy Day.

Reggie—Aunt Maud says we should save our nickels for a rainy day. I wonder what she means by that.

Mabel—I guess so we can take a car home.
—Harper's Bazar.

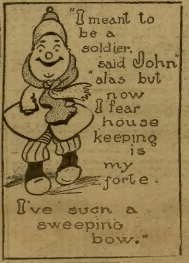
Paid to Be Naughty.

"Why are you so often naughty, Arthur?" asked his papa.

"Because mamma gives me a cent if I'll promise to be good," said Arthur.

"Well, then, why don't you stay good?" was the next question.

"Why, papa, can't you see?" answered Arthur, in surprise at his father's query. "She never asks me to promise to be good until after I've been very bad."


"I meant to be a soldier," said John "alas but now I fear housekeeping is my forte.
I've such a sweeping bow."

Guess Who I Am.

This is a simple little game, but it makes lots of fun. One advantage about it is that it requires no thinking, no knowledge of books, no preparation of any kind; it is just a jolly game to make boys and girls of any age roar with laughter.

One of the players is to be blindfolded, and the other stand about the room as they please. The blindfolded one then walks or gropes around until he touches a player, and the player touched must then stand still and make a noise in imitation of some animal; say a cat, a dog, a cow, a pig, or a horse.

If the blindfolded player chooses, he can have the sound made three times, and if he then guesses the name of the person, the person takes his place. If he does not guess correctly, he releases the player and tries again.

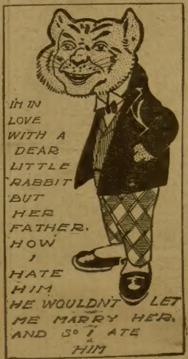
New Breed of Dogs.

Little Willie, who is a very sharp boy, had been watching a dog chasing his tail for three minutes. "Papa," he asked, "what kind of a dog is that?"

"That," said the father, "is a watchdog."

Willie was silent a moment.

"Well," he finally said, "from the time he takes to wind himself up he certainly must be a Waterbury watchdog!"


I'M IN LOVE WITH A DEAR LITTLE RABBIT BUT HER FATHER. HOW I HATE HIM HE WOULDN'T LET ME MARRY HER. AND SO I ATE HIM

A Kinder Fate.

Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the mice away.
Again: Fate might serve him a better trick
By making him continue as a brick.

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